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SANCTA-MARIS-IMMACULATA.

THE INQUIRY

OF A

RETIRED CITIZEN

IN THE

Roman Catholic Religion.

EDITED BY THE

REV. HENRY FORMBY.

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Pardon
us, for thou, Galilee, dost see." John 1, 46.

LONDON :

BURNS AND LAMBERT.

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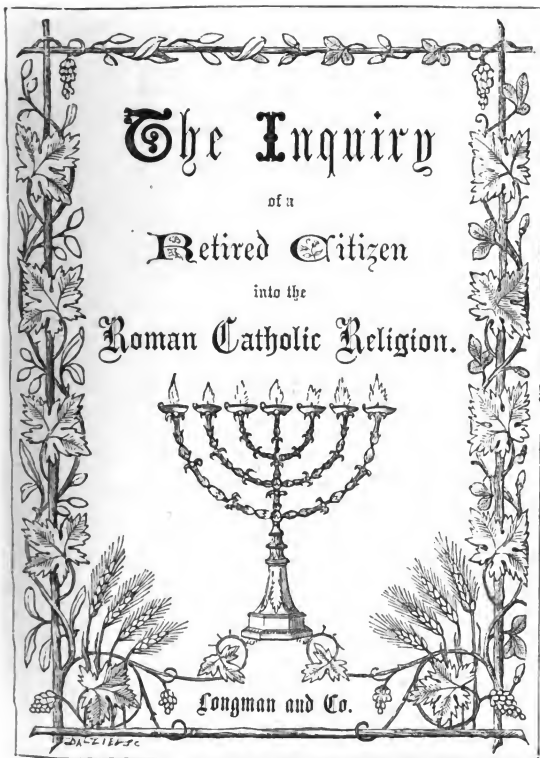
MATERNAL GRIEF

FOR THE PROLONGED ABSENCE OF A BELOVED CHILD FROM HIS HOME.



ANNA ANXIOUSLY COUNTS THE DAYS FOR THE RETURN OF HER SON TOBIAS.

Tobias x. 9.





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A Guide for all to the Catholic Church.

OR THE

INQUIRY OF A RETIRED CITIZEN

INTO THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION.

EDITED BY THE

REV. HENRY FORMBY.

**"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith to him,
Come and see." John i. 46.**

LONDON:

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TO
ST. PETER,
PRINCE OF THE APOSTLES,
WHO,
HAVING TOILED ALL THE NIGHT AND HAVING TAKEN NOTHING,
ON HEARING THE WORDS OF JESUS,
SAYING TO THEE,
“ LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP, AND LET DOWN
YOUR NETS FOR A DRAUGHT,”
DID AT ONCE OBEY ;
CATCHING THEREUPON A VAST MULTITUDE OF FISHES,
AND RECEIVING THE GRACIOUS PROMISE,
“ FEAR NOT ;
FROM THIS TIME FORWARD THOU SHALT
CATCH MEN” (*Luke v. 5*).



*The Proprietor reserves to himself the right of translating this work
into other languages.*

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PREFACE.

ALL men understand the Religion which Jesus Christ came into the world to bring to men to have been placed on the footing of an invitation to come to Him, to receive at His hands such rich and signal benefits as entirely besit the character of the Divine Giver. And with the direct invitation of Jesus Christ to come to Him, no men, as a rule, have any quarrel; just in the same manner as the guests in the parable, who were invited to the king's supper, in no way quarrelled with the king for inviting them, though they did not all accept the king's invitation. Why, then, may not the invitation to enter the Communion of the Roman Catholic Church be equally freely given without its being liable to be made the ground of any legitimate quarrel? Again, the Psalmist bears testimony that "*many say, Who sheweth us any good things?*" (Ps. iv. 6); whereas, speaking for himself, he says, "*I expect to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living*" (Ps. xxvi. 13). Now, if it be good and pious to hold this same hope in company with the Psalmist, what reasonable objection can there be against a plain and open inquiry into the good things which the Church of Rome offers to all, without partiality or preference?

Catholic charity, also, will not fail to see the good work that lies before it in the steady promotion of this inquiry; for "*charity,*" as St. Paul says, "*never faileth,*" and "*love is strong as death, and many waters have not extinguished charity*" (Cant. viii. 6). Let each good

Catholic, then, every where only take courage to say to a neighbour: "Do not suppose that the call to this inquiry comes from any mere word of mine. I do no more than entreat you to consider that it is your own self-interest which dictates to you to take nothing for granted against it, and which tells you that you will do yourself a very great wrong by assuming the danger of any imposture, without having first diligently examined for yourself. The Jews of Berea, you will remember, are said to have been more noble than those of Thessalonica, for the very reason that they refused to take for granted that St. Paul was the impostor which he was generally said to be; and they instituted a search for themselves into the Scriptures to see if the things were not what St. Paul had preached to them (Acts xvii. 11). Suffer me, then, in the same manner to offer you a short and easy introduction to a similar search into the Scriptures by means of the little book, of which I here beg your acceptance. From its pages you may inform yourself, free from all danger of being offended, as to what the privileges and advantages are which the Communion of the Roman Catholic Church offers to you. And do not wonder at my solicitude that you should read it; for my religion teaches me to have this missionary charity for others; and I hope I show in my own case the deep value I have for these advantages."

"*Cast thy bread on the running waters, and after many days thou shalt find it again*" (Eccles. xi. 1), says the Scripture; and what stronger encouragement for its work of love can missionary charity desire than is contained in these words?

A PLAIN ENGLISHMAN'S INQUIRY
INTO THE
PRIVILEGES AND ADVANTAGES THAT ARE OFFERED TO
ALL IN THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION.

DIALOGUE FIRST.

MR. GOODMAN'S REASONS FOR MAKING HIS INQUIRY INTO
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION.

Loquuntur : MR. THOMAS GOODMAN, a retired Merchant of the City of London, in affluent circumstances ; and his friend MR. PHILIP FAITHFUL, a Roman Catholic, who has also retired from business in the City, in the possession of a competent fortune.

SCENE : The road through East Sheen to Richmond (Surrey), on a beautiful morning at an advanced part of the Summer.

Mr. Thomas Goodman. Good day, my old and excellent friend Philip Faithful. I am certainly quite in luck's way this beautiful summer morning to find you out at this hour ; and from the direction you seem to be taking, I hope that, in addition to the loveliness of the day, I may have the pleasure of your company at least part of the way to Richmond, where I am going on some little business. There have been many things passing

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through my mind, Philip, the nature of which you will scarcely be likely to guess; and you may perhaps know the Scripture proverb which says, "Talk over thy cause with thy friend" (Prov. xxv. 9); therefore since you and I, Philip, have been old friends this many a long year,—notwithstanding the Popery that is in you, and which does not seem as if it would be very easily taken out of you,—I hope with all my heart you will be able to walk with me, at least part of the way to Richmond.

Mr. Philip Faithful. Well, Thomas, I see you still keep at your old practice of quoting the Scriptures to me, as if you charitably thought it was my only chance of getting to know any thing about them. Now, not to be behind with you, let me quote you a text in return for yours, "If thy friend constrain thee to walk a mile with him, walk with him two" (Matt. v. 4); and as these two miles will just about bring us to Richmond, with the greatest pleasure I will postpone the unimportant errand on which I was going for my wife, and walk to Richmond with you. But what do you say to our taking the road through the Park? It will be a little longer, it is true; but we shall be more out of the way of the dust and noise of the road, and the air will be particularly fresh and pleasant there just now; and when we are in the quiet and freedom of the Park, you can tell me more at ease what it is that is running in your mind.

Thomas. By all means, Philip, let us turn round and make for the Park; and, in the mean time, I will begin to tell you what it is that has of late been passing through my mind. You know, Philip, that since the death of my wife, I have fallen more than ever

into the way of not being attached to one form of religion more than to another ; and I have latterly taken a good deal to the practice of sitting and reading my Bible at home by myself, though I sometimes think it is an unsocial sort of thing to be substituting such a practice as this for going to a church or place of worship; and often during these lonely hours it has been passing through my mind that there is something more sociable and life-like, after all, in the way you Roman Catholics go on. I see there must evidently be something in the Roman Catholic religion that satisfies people, and makes them attached to it, more than there is in any other form of religion. It was only the other day since I read an account, in I forget what newspaper, of the way in which a Roman Catholic priest, a native of France, was put to death by the Annamite government in Cochin-China, for coming into their territory as a Missionary of his religion. There was something in the manner and spirit in which this Roman Catholic priest suffered death for his faith quite different from any thing I ever read of before as connected with any other form of religion ; and, moreover, I do not think that the missionaries of other forms of religion consent quite so willingly to put themselves in the same manner in death's way. Turning, then, this and other similar things over in my mind, Philip, and seeing, as I cannot help seeing, that there is a fascination which binds people of the most opposite sorts to the Roman Catholic religion, from the poor old apple-women, who sit at their stalls at the corners of streets, up to statesmen and learned divines, I have not been able to resist the thoughts that have been continually coming into my mind, that

very possibly this religion, after all, might be the best cure for the feeling of loneliness and isolation that is growing upon me. And I have at length made up my mind that I would make a regular inquiry into it, in order that I might know more about it than I do; and this is why I am so glad to have fallen in with you.

Philip. Well, Thomas, you know I have been a Roman Catholic all my life, and I should be only too happy to help you or any one else to find the same joy and peace in believing this religion that I find myself; but I doubt very much how far I might prove qualified to answer your inquiries. Have you spoken, Thomas, with any one else as yet on the subject of your inquiry?

Thomas. I have mentioned the matter, Philip, more than once to some few members of my own family, and I fancy they think they see something brooding on my mind which they suppose proceeds from an affection of the spleen. I have not, however, I must admit, advanced very much with my inquiry in consequence of mentioning the matter to them; for my brother only joked me and laughed at me, and his wife asked me whether perhaps my living alone was not preying upon my spirits, and hinted that I was not too old to look out for a second wife. Another old friend actually rated me, and wondered whether I was not going out of my mind, to be thinking of turning Papist in my old age. And, moreover, they all agreed that the Roman Catholic religion was only the particular way of those who followed it, and which could not possibly concern any one else besides those who had had the misfortune to be brought up as Roman Catholics in their youth, and who had not since shaken off its

superstitions. So you see, Philip, I did not advance much with my inquiry from mentioning the matter among my own family and friends.

Philip. I fear, Thomas, from what you tell me, that your family and friends would raise a terrible outcry against you, if you were to prosecute your proposed inquiry, and if it were to end by your becoming a Roman Catholic.

Thomas. I think, Philip, you are contemplating my becoming a Roman Catholic as the result of my inquiries rather too prematurely. How can you possibly be so sure that my inquiry will bring me into the presence of reasons which are at all likely to have the effect you seem to foresee? However, as to the objection that my friends and family might have to such a step, of course I should be sorry to do any thing unnecessarily to displease them; but still an Englishman, and particularly a plain Englishman as I pride myself upon being, has as much right to embrace the Roman Catholic religion as the people of other countries; and in a question of this kind, I suppose every one, whether man or woman, may with perfect justice claim the right of choosing for themselves.

Philip. Well but, Thomas, this opposition that family interests and friends make to a conversion to the Roman Catholic religion is often such a serious matter as to be worth considering; and in going through with your inquiry,—from which, of course, I should be the last person to wish to discourage you,—it might nevertheless be as well for you to have in view what it is you are going to face. You remember, as you are such a man for the Scriptures, the parable

of the traveller who fell among thieves on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, and who was left stripped and half dead on the road-side. The priest who came by that way, you remember, took excellent care to pass on the other side, and refused even to look at the wounded man; for it would seem he was sharp enough to foresee what a troublesome business it would be to do any thing effectual for him, and that consequently the best way under such circumstances was to appear not to see him. The Levite, with less worldly prudence, came by, and stopped to look at him; but he too, after he had satisfied himself by inspection what a troublesome business it would be to meddle with the wounded man, passed on, and left him lying on the road. It was left to the good Samaritan to be the one who could make up his mind to face the burden of taking care of the wounded man. Now, Thomas, when you have made all your inquiries, and when they end in showing you that you ought to become a Roman Catholic, which part do you think you will be likely to choose,—that of the Levite, who was made to desist from his good purpose from seeing the immediate trouble it was going to bring upon him; or that of the good Samaritan, with whom the goodness of the purpose weighed more than the trouble attending upon executing it? If you doubt yourself, and fear you would be likely to play the part of the Levite, and shrink from the good work to be done, because of the trouble annexed to it, would it not be wiser for you now to act the part of the priest, and not to proceed any further with your proposed inquiries at all?

Thomas. This seems a very strange suggestion,

Philip, of yours. I do not at all understand how you can be the person to make it. I never heard before that the examples of either the priest or the Levite were particularly commendable.

Philip. You know, Thomas, you profess to be such a great man for the Scripture, and of course you remember the text, "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the cost, to see if he have wherewith to finish it; lest after he shall have laid the foundation, and then finds himself not able to finish it, all begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish" (Luke xiv. 28). Have you asked yourself the question, what it is you propose to gain by your inquiry into the Roman Catholic religion? Are you, by any chance, only going to treat it just as another Englishman might start off for the Gaboon, to satisfy himself whether M. du Chaillu has given a correct account of the Gorilla country or not? and have you only a feeling of curiosity about it to gratify, like the generality of English tourists in the Italian churches?

Thomas. I believe you are acting the part of a real friend, Philip, in testing the matter with me thus sharply; but, nevertheless, I had some idea that the Roman Catholic religion was a sort of fisher of men, and certainly the way that regular fishermen go about their trade is to catch all that they possibly can any how into their net. So I do not know whether you are quite in order, Philip, in being so very cautious about warning me not to proceed with my inquiries. I think you had better leave the matter to take its chance, and lend your aid to get the fish into the net,

if he has any sort of disposition to come into it, without your forecasting the future consequences too scrupulously.

Philip. Well, Thomas, pardon me if I have seemed to be a little sharp. You know that I am ready to do any thing I possibly can to satisfy you ; and if you really think that I am competent to answer your questions, I will do all and any thing for you that I can. And as there are plenty of learned ecclesiastics to whom you can at any time apply with perfect ease when you have reason to doubt what I may say, nothing will please me more than to be entirely at your service, to give you all the information I am able ; only I should like to understand, if I could, a little better what it is in particular that you desire to learn.

Thomas. Well then, Philip, what I want to learn is this : I have seen you for a long time practise your religion as a Roman Catholic with the greatest regularity, and you have brought up a large family of sons to do the same. I have said to myself, This Philip Faithful must find something or other in the Roman Catholic religion which satisfies and rewards him for the way in which he follows it up ; for he brings all his sons up to it, and they turn out good and creditable young men, who keep themselves out of the mischief to which other young men give themselves up ; so it plainly cannot be the inhuman sort of religion that some people say it is. My Bible-reading by myself I find is not nearly so happy and sociable a way of going on as I could wish, and as I cannot help thinking yours must be. I do not therefore see what there is to prevent me trying to better

myself in the way of a religion, if I can. And now, Philip, this is my reason for wanting to know more about this Roman Catholic religion of yours; for very many things prompt me to think I should do better for myself by embracing it.

Philip. Then, Thomas, now that I understand your meaning better, I will endeavour to satisfy you to the utmost of my abilities; and the best way for us I think will be, that we should be contented to take only a few of the principal, or, as we may call them, the master facts of the case at first, and examine them quietly together, Thomas, as best we may, each by itself in its turn, and also in their connexion one with the other, and so not confuse ourselves by attempting too much at once.

Thomas. By all means, Philip; you will know better what to do than I shall, so I leave the whole matter entirely in your hands.

Philip. But, Thomas, please to bear in mind all through, that we are not going to enter into any thing that has the least savour of personal controversy. This through life I have always most steadily resisted; and I would never allow any of my sons to run away with the notion that they were called upon to irritate their neighbours with the odds and ends and smatterings of controversial lore, which, you know, would have been the sum total of what they could possibly have aspired to. Therefore you see, Thomas, the sort of man you have come to consult; and as to what I may have been able to do myself, during leisure hours, to acquire the knowledge that it becomes every Roman Catholic to possess,—of this, Thomas, you will have to judge yourself from the manner in which I

shall answer your questions. However, pray be quite satisfied beforehand to believe that, if you should end by being convinced, it will be entirely owing to the mercy and grace of God, and not to any thing I have been able to say to you.

Thomas. I am all eagerness and readiness to listen to what you have got to say, so pray begin.

Philip. If my ears have not deceived me, Thomas, I think I must have heard you in the beginning speak pleasantly about my "Popery." Of course, I am not offended with you; for I know that you mean nothing but what is kind and friendly; and there are odd occasions on which I do not object to the word "Popery" myself; for at least it intelligibly designates the religion of the Pope, and this is, in point of fact, the religion about which you wish to inquire.

Thomas. You have hit the right nail on the head, Philip. Proceed.

Philip. Then, Thomas, let me borrow the hint from your own word, and give you the Pope himself, and the city of Rome where he holds his seat, as one of the master facts connected with my religion on which my mind always reposes with the sense of the most perfect confidence and delight.

Thomas. Do you tell me so, Philip, without joking? for if you do, you certainly surprise me exceedingly. Judging from the knowledge I have had the opportunity of acquiring from occasionally being in company with Catholics, they have always seemed to me to wish both to hear and to know as little as they can possibly help about the Pope; and now here are you asserting what sounds to me as the strangest possible thing, that the Pope is one of the principal facts on

which your mind rests with confidence and delight. Are you then, Philip, something different in this respect from the general body of the Catholics of your country?

Philip. I cannot possibly tell what particular Catholics you may refer to, Thomas; for perhaps you may not have been altogether fortunate in the kind of Catholics you may have met with, and I suppose you must naturally be aware that there are the good and the bad among the Roman Catholics, as there are amongst all other people. However, allow me, Thomas, the observation, that we must endeavour to keep more closely to our point, and to admit as few of these side remarks as possible, or otherwise we may find that by degrees we shall wander away altogether from the purpose we have in view.

Thomas. Well, Philip, do but proceed; for I am extremely curious to know how the Pope can possibly be made out to be any positive downright attraction to any man. I was prepared to hear that you were able, by covering up his name, and by keeping his words as much as possible out of sight, to try and put a good face upon a questionable business, and in this manner to make the best of your having a Pope set over you, possibly for the sake of something else which you may have a really intelligible reason for liking. But as you assure me that your mind reposes in perfect peace and confidence in your religion for the express reason that it gives you a Pope, in the name of goodness lose no time in telling me what it is you find to like in this Pope of yours, in whom all the rest of the world, as it would seem, discover so very little to please them.

Philip. Yes, but, Thomas, you must really not endanger our wandering away from the subject so much by these side remarks; for if you should succeed in drawing me away into commenting upon all your various digressions, we shall run the risk of possibly falling into the very controversy which I particularly desire to avoid, and at least we shall most certainly endanger our losing sight of our real purpose.

Thomas. I see that it is not much use contesting a point with you, Philip; you take care to have reason on your side, and you then persist most immovably. Very good; but what do you say, if you can spare the time, to our taking a seat in the shade, under one of these glorious old oaks? They are somewhat in nature, Philip, what your religion is in the world,—a plant that came indeed from an acorn, but which far away outlives all its less-enduring neighbours of the forest. Any how let us take advantage of the hospitable shade of the particular monarch of the forest which we are approaching, and under its branches I will listen to all that you have to say to me about your Pope.

Philip. I hope our promised session under the oak, Thomas, is only a happy omen of the future shelter you will one day make up your mind to take under the shade of the real oak-tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and about which you are now only inquiring.

[*They proceed to take their seats on the grass under the oak-tree.*]

DIALOGUE SECOND.

THE THRONE OF ST. PETER IN THE CITY OF ROME.

SCENE: *Under the oak-tree in Richmond Park, where PHILIP and THOMAS have each made for themselves comfortable seats on the grass, in the shade.*

PHILIP points out to THOMAS in what way the Roman Catholic Church is constituted a perfect society, under the judicature of the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, and how it is that this judicature makes the Roman Catholic religion the most honourable of all the religions of the whole world.

Philip. In order to commence our subject in regular form, Thomas, I must ask if you admit that there was a time when the Christian religion was represented in the world by the person of one single chief Teacher, who was not only a real man, eating and drinking, and going about His day's work like other men, but who, when any dispute arose in the Christian society respecting His doctrines, was referred to about the matter in dispute, and gave His decision in such a manner as that no one could unsay what He said?

Thomas. I suppose you are speaking of the times of the Gospel, Philip, and as far as I can see I must admit what you say. It is plainly enough related by the Evangelists, that our Lord Jesus Christ did both eat and drink, and that He went about His day's work like any other man. And when He settled any dispute, it is of course plain that no one could afterwards unsay what He had said.

Philip. Do you also admit, Thomas, that when St. Peter said to our Lord, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," he was speaking to a real man of flesh and blood?

Thomas. The Gospel of St. Matthew appears to me to say this in a manner much too explicit to admit of doubt; but what is the reason which makes you ask the question?

Philip. But do you observe, Thomas, that on this occasion St. Peter did not say, I confess such and such doctrines to be my belief; or, I profess such and such Scriptures to be my rule of faith; but, "I confess this man to be the Christ, the Son of the living God"?

Thomas. I take due note of what you say; but I confess I cannot at present see its drift.

Philip. You will see its drift presently, Thomas; but in the mean time be sure that you understand what it is that you are admitting. St. Peter then, according to what you say, was one of a society composed of different persons, who acknowledged that they had amongst them a real man of flesh and blood, about whose person they were all gathered, and that His word was to be final to them in such a manner as that there could be no hearing of any cause by any court higher than Himself, and no appeal from His decision.

Thomas. I do not see what reason there can be to object to a word you say.

Philip. But now, Thomas, do you admit that this particular condition of the Christian society—viz. to be constituted under such a living judge, whose decision was to be thus final—was one which was

known and intended in the eternal counsels of God, before our Lord came into the world?

Thomas. I do not see, Philip, how I could very well say the contrary. For if I were to assert that Almighty God had done any thing without knowing beforehand what it was that He was going to do, I should be representing Him as inferior to any ordinarily wise and prudent man; for all such men invariably make a rule to themselves, to know beforehand what it is they are about to do. So I cannot but conclude that it would be a manifest impiety in me, were I to say less of Almighty God than I should wish to say of any ordinarily prudent man.

Philip. But do you think, Thomas,—considering that St. James expressly says, “With God there is neither variableness, nor shadow of changing” (St. James i. 17),—that if it was part of His eternal plan that the Christian society should begin by being constituted under a living man of flesh and blood, whose word was to be final in the judgment and settlement of all disputes, that it could be consistent with this eternal plan to make an abrupt change, and suddenly to withdraw the person of such a judge from the Christian society?

Thomas. Philip, you put the whole matter to me in a new light, in which I never remember to have been asked to look at it before. I now see very plainly from what you say, that if God takes away this one man from the Christian society whom He has once given to them to be their final judge for the settlement of all their disputes, He plainly makes a very great change in this one respect; and if He does make this great change, He certainly either

does not follow out His original plan, or else He has made His beginning without having had any original plan at all to follow out.

Philip. And do you not now see, Thomas, whichever way you look at the question, that it is quite impossible that God should have begun to form the Christian society without having had a preconcerted plan; and that it is also equally impossible that, having had such a preconcerted plan, He should suddenly overthrow His plan, and prosecute His work in a way totally different from that in which He had commenced it? If, therefore, the Christian society was begun upon the plan of its having the person of one living man of flesh and blood given to it, to act the part of the final judge for the settlement of all disputes, both the infinite wisdom and the unchangeable nature of God alike require that the original plan of the Christian society should be continued, and that the person of this one man for its supreme judge should be allowed to remain with the Christian society so long as it should itself exist upon earth.

Thomas. Your reasoning is quite new to me, Philip, and I must confess I do not see how I am to dispute what you say; nevertheless, I should like to hear you explain your subject a little more at length.

Philip. Then, Thomas, as I now understand you, you admit that God began the Christian society upon the plan of giving to it a living man, to whom all disputes that arose in it were to be referred as occasion required; and you further admit that God cannot be conceived as taking up such a plan in order afterwards lightly to depart from it. Do you now see, on reflection, any thing contrary to right reason in His

having begun the Christian society in the way of which we have been speaking, viz. His giving to it the person of a living judge, whose word was to be the end of all dispute?

Thomas. I must cheerfully acknowledge, Philip, that I can see nothing but what is highly agreeable to right reason in saying,—if it be the pleasure of God to assume a human nature and to come upon earth, to found such a society as the Christian society, among men constituted as we all seem to be,—that He must certainly do well in giving to the society which He has come to found the gift of the person of a living judge, to provide for the final adjustment and settlement of all the disputes which will be sure, sooner or later, to rise up in it. For we know from everyday experience that none of the commonest matters, where a considerable number of persons have to be conjointly concerned, are so much as ever attempted without the office of the judge or umpire being first competently filled. We find that we cannot have even such a thing as a horse or boat race, or a cricket or coursing match, without there first being an agreement entered into as to who is to be the judge, by whose decision all concerned consent to abide. And common sense very plainly says that, unless life is to be one incessant scene of strife and litigation, every thing done by men requires to be presided over by a judge, at whom they must stop, and beyond whom they must be satisfied not to think of carrying any appeal. Or otherwise, if they will not submit to this condition of their lives, disputants must either keep going from judge to judge *ad infinitum*, to see which of the contending parties can soonest weary out their

opponents. Or they must adopt the plan which is the one that nations generally select, and fight out their differences by blows and weapons of war,—a mode of settlement, be it observed, by which not so much the justice of the cause as the respective strength or good fortune of the combatants is tested, and which, again, experience shows not uncommonly to end in the destruction of one, and sometimes of both belligerents.

Philip. Very well said, Thomas. Then you admit that God did right to give to the Christian society the person of a living judge, whose word would be the end of all dispute,—the same whom St. Peter acknowledged when he uttered the words, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Now can you give me any sufficient reason, Thomas, why God, after having given such an invaluable gift to the Christian society in the beginning, should afterwards withdraw and discontinue His gift?

Thomas. I must acknowledge that I can see no sufficient reason why God should withdraw and discontinue His gift. If the person of a living judge was necessary when the Christian society was only in its infancy, and disputes were consequently much less frequent, far more would the presence of the judge be necessary to the society when it came to extend itself, and embrace great numbers of persons; and again, much more still when it came to embrace whole nations. Moreover, it appears to me that God would show a partiality, which I cannot conceive, were He to be seen to give an invaluable gift to one generation, and to refuse the like gift to another, though the need for the gift, to say the least, appears to be the same

in one generation as in another. It seems to me, therefore, most reasonable that God should continue the presence of the judge, of whom we have been speaking, to every generation. Only, I confess, I do not see how He is to provide for the person of the judge being perpetuated ; and without this, as far as I can understand, the gift of such a judge lies under the original difficulty of being always in danger of failing. I should like therefore to hear you explain this point to me more at length.

Philip. Let us consider together, Thomas, how the thing is to be done. The only way in which we can conceive that such a judge could be permanently given to the Christian society would be through the person of some one whom it should please Jesus Christ to appoint to be His own Vicar or Vicegerent, to represent Him, and to act with the necessary authority for Him in the Christian society, whenever it should be His pleasure to withdraw His own Divine person from all visible contact with them. Of course, without conferring immortality on the person so appointed, one such appointment would be of no avail ; so that it would plainly be necessary to provide for an uninterrupted succession of such appointments, continuing as long as the world should last. Moreover, as the Christian society spread itself over the world, it would become necessary to provide the proper precautions against rivals setting themselves up, and claiming to exercise the rights of the real Vicegerent. Again, in order that people might be able to come to the Vicar of Jesus Christ from the most distant countries, without any difficulty as to finding out his habitation, and free from all but the

natural risks incidental to any long journey, it would be necessary that he should be established in the permanent possession of some great and well-known city, where no one could venture to interfere with him, and where he would be able to give a secure and honourable reception to all who should desire to come to him. And lastly, if, over and above all this, Jesus Christ should be pleased to furnish to the whole world a manifest and most convincing proof that the destinies of the present world were really in His hands, to dispose of them according to His own will and pleasure, it would be quite natural to expect that He would not place His Vicar in any second or third rate city; but if there were among the great cities of the earth one particular city which was more identified than any other, through its previous history, with the immemorial traditions of empire and sovereignty over the world, and which was possessed of a more glorious name in the annals of men than any other city,—this is the city which we might expect Him to give to His Vicar rather than any other. And if the city of Rome should prove to answer best to the above description, then we must say Rome is the city where we should expect to find the supreme judge of the Christian society established in a power and dignity suited to the sublimity of his office.

Thomas. I imagine, Philip, if I am to admit Jesus Christ to be a true and real man, and if I also confess with St. Peter that “He is the Christ, the Son of the living God,” all that you say will follow, as far as I can see, in strict logical deduction; only I must plead that all this is very new to me, and I have not been in the habit of hearing the reasons of your holding by

the Pope set forth in the way in which you now put the whole matter before me. I see that you have much more to say for your doctrine of a Pope than I had any idea you could have had. Perhaps, however, this only accounts for what I have both read, and even heard some people say, that Popery is by no means an ordinary deception, but the very master-craft of all the deceptions of the devil, the one thing that overtops every other one of the deceits whereby Satan deceives men. What have you to say on this score, Philip? for I should much like to hear.

Philip. Thomas, those who make this assertion seriously of the Papal power are only desperate men, who, on finding themselves forced by their own opposition to it to try to give some explanation of its existence that will justify themselves, do not mind how they outrage even ordinary reason in what they say, knowing that for the most part they have only a certain number of blind partisans to satisfy, who are ready to listen to any thing which they may choose to assert. A very little reflection, however, will soon show us the length of absurdity to which the folly of these men carries them. The devil, as the popular saying runs, is nothing but the ape of Almighty God; and his works bear something like the same proportion to the works of Jesus Christ which the grotesque attempts of a monkey bear to the actions and works of a man. Perhaps, then, the following comparison, which we will suppose for the occasion, will be the readiest way of showing you how these men are to have their folly brought home to their own door. I suppose you, then, to be acquainted with a painter of world-wide celebrity, who, according to general

rumour, has been long at work upon a large historical painting, to a sight of which, on a certain day, the public at large are to be admitted. The painter is also well known to have living with him in the same house an ape that has acquired no little discreditable notoriety for his mischievous tricks. When the day appointed arrives, you go to see the great painter's picture, in company with a number of your friends, and you find it in every way to come up to your own expectations. You hear also around you nothing but similar exclamations of satisfaction and delight, until, on passing a certain group, you come upon a particular person, with an ominous face, who is warning a small knot of listeners not to trust their own eyes, for that he can most positively assure them that the celebrated painter has had nothing whatever to do with the picture which they see every body busy in admiring, and that from beginning to end it is the work of the mischievous ape who is living with him in his house. You naturally say to yourself: Any how what this man is saying is tolerably monstrous and incredible; but being acquainted with the wise king's rule, "Answer a fool according to his folly," you determine to try its effect upon him; and you therefore come to him and say: "What you are saying, sir, is no doubt quite true; for every body knows how easy it is for a great multitude to be deceived, and apes have done wonderful things before now; but still, we have it from the painter's own mouth that he has painted a large historical picture, and as there is no mistake about this being the painter's own house where we now are, we can hardly understand how he would be likely to allow

“ the public to go away under the false impression, that he was the painter of what was really no more than a mischievous ape’s work. However, sir, as you could not possibly think of asserting what you are saying without the best information, perhaps you would have the goodness to settle the question at once, by taking us to see the real picture which the real painter has painted.”

No more formal refutation of their folly than this can be needed ; nor indeed would any other be of the least use. For if, after what St. John says, that Jesus Christ has been manifested to dissolve the works of the devil (1 Ep. iii. 8), men can believe that the devil’s being allowed to rule the world from the imperial city of Rome answers to the promised dissolving of his works, they are of course beyond the reach of rational argument. If the Papacy,—after it has formed and guided the chief nations of Europe in all that is good and noble for so many centuries, after it has been all the while an object on which the eyes of spectators from every part of the world have rested with mingled wonder and respect, and still is that before which countless multitudes bow in willing homage,—be nevertheless only what these men say it is, viz. a work of the evil one, then the consequence inexorably follows, that, as regards visible power over the present world, Jesus Christ occupies a manifestly inferior place to the evil one in His own world ; and, in short, the ape is the better painter of the two. An impiety plainly worthy only of its authors.

If then, Thomas, you adhere to your first admission, you now see how you find yourself brought step by step, through the simple logic of facts, into the

presence of the Sovereign Pontiff, who sits on the throne of St. Peter, in the city of Rome.

Thomas. I cannot but readily admit, Philip, the force of what you say. I can certainly see no reason why Christ should not have appointed the person of a Vicar to represent Him in this world ; on the contrary, I seem to perceive numerous reasons why He should ; and if He has done so, certainly the Pope of Rome has a much better claim to be considered to be His Vicar than any one else has. For by all accounts the line of the Popes in succession goes backward up to the very Person of Jesus Christ Himself ; while every other throne or power in the world is of much more recent date, to say nothing of any other improbabilities that may attach to them. And as to the wild assertion of the Papal power being the work of the devil, this, as you justly say, is only a last resource for desperate men, not deserving of any other refutation than the one you have given to it.

Philip. Then, Thomas, you now begin to see something of the reasons on which, as a Roman Catholic, I account it so great an honour to be under the Pope. If the very logic of facts, by itself, tends to bring you to the admission that the Papal throne can have been established by no other power than that of Jesus Christ Himself, who has given to it the most honourable city of the whole world, what can, then, be more truly honourable than to be a Roman Catholic, and to claim, as a son, to have a share in that which is thus seen to be exalted above every thing else in the world ?

Thomas. But you speak of the Pope being established in the most honourable city of the world.

How do you account, Philip, for the fact of the present Pope having to be maintained in the possession of his city by foreign bayonets?

Philip. "Foreign bayonets," Thomas, is only a phrase which you and others are in the habit of using without at all properly understanding what it is you say. Yet you can hardly be ignorant of the fact, that if you were to go to Pius IX. himself, and if you were to ask him by whom he considered that he was being defended in his city, he would answer you at once, that he considered he was being defended by the bayonets of his right dear sons. And if you were to turn to those who are defending him, and were to ask them, "Whom do you understand yourselves to be defending?" they would immediately reply in the same manner, "Our own revered Holy Father." If, then, it be not honourable for a father to be defended by his own right dear sons, and for the right dear children themselves to defend their father, in what cases is defence ever honourable? And if you ask, Thomas, how it comes to pass, that the Pope is able to do what no other man in the wide world can do, viz. to call all people alike, no matter from what nation or country they may come, his "right dear children," see if you can give any explanation of his having this power willingly conceded to him, even by his adversaries, except you seek for the cause of it in his being, at least tacitly, acknowledged by all men to be Vicar of Him who died on the cross to redeem all the sons of men, without either the preference or the exclusion of any.

Thomas. I begin now to see somewhat better into the reasons which make you so proud of being under

the Pope. You appear to consider, Philip, that the Pope's power and dignity, and the extent to which, in spite of every outcry, his name and words are really feared in the world, reflect a distinct honour and repute upon the profession of the Roman Catholic religion.

Philip. Certainly, Thomas; from my inmost heart. I hold this to be most true. And can you yourself think it could possibly be agreeable to what we know of the bounty and goodness of Jesus Christ, that He should be understood to say to the nations of the world, "I invite you to embrace the religion which I have brought you; but I intend that it should lower you to a mean and degraded position in the sight of all your fellow men"? No, Thomas; I understand that there is nothing more honourable in the entire world than to profess the Roman Catholic religion; and as a Roman Catholic I claim, by the best of all titles, a right to every thing that is ennobling and honourable in human life.

Thomas. I think I now fully understand what it is you mean to say, Philip; and I must freely confess that you have put the matter to me in a totally new light; which, nevertheless, I must take a little time to reflect upon and consider. In the mean time, however, if I really were to become a Roman Catholic, I should certainly, Philip, prefer to be like you, and to feel some of your noble pride in the honour and dignity of your faith, rather than to be like some few Catholics whom I have occasionally noticed, ashamed to profess their religion, and always appearing as if they were apologising both for it and for themselves.

Philip. It is not very good-natured, Thomas, to be

too hard upon those who have had to pass through times of terrible outlawry and persecution, brought upon them by the sins of others who lived before them; let us rather remember in how many things we ourselves fall short of what may be justly demanded from us. Still, if you should at any time chance to observe among Catholics a mode of speaking of the Pope which no condition of suffering and persecution can possibly justify, or even excuse, you must take care to try not to be more scandalised than you can help. And it would not be well to indulge in too many romantic imaginations about the state of perfection in which you might, perhaps, expect to find every thing amongst us. For it is a curious phenomenon that is often to be met with, and which I dare say you may have remarked yourself, as regards the Roman Catholic religion, that sometimes the very persons who have only just the moment before finished calling it "the great whore of Babylon, the mother of all abominations," think they are acting quite rationally in exhibiting a great anger against it, because they have found out that it does not in some remote particular exhibit proof of superhuman perfection. Yet, Thomas, our Lord never promised any such thing as that the society which He came to found should exhibit nothing but superhuman perfection; on the contrary, He foresaw that besides its virtues and examples of sanctity, it would also abound in numerous scandals, which would be of a nature to bring it into very great disrepute; and that among the difficulties which it would have to encounter in gaining people over to join its communion, would be the bad odour of the scan-

dals committed in its bosom. This is what our Lord's own Apostles never considered themselves bound to disguise for a single moment; and accordingly, in the very generation which had seen our Lord Himself alive, and when His words and His Person were fresh in almost every body's recollection, we have an Apostle saying, "For many walk, of whom I have told you before, and tell you now even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. iii. 19). You are a reader of the Scriptures, Thomas, and you will no doubt remember, that on one occasion three thousand of the men of Juda came to Samson when he was on the rock Etam, and said to him, "Dost thou not know that the Philistines have dominion over us? What was it that made thee act thus? We are come to bind thee, and deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines" (Judges xv. 12). If the men of Juda could do this to their own champion and defender, you need not, Thomas, be scandalised at the occasional similar conduct of Catholics towards the Pope; for, however shameful such conduct may be, you have an Apostle's word for the possibility of there being found among the Christians those who glory in their shame; and there is, as you see, nothing precisely new in such conduct; indeed, it was the lot of our Lord Himself, as every one knows, to be betrayed by Judas, one of His own Apostles.

Thomas. I have been very much interested, Philip, in all you have said, and I promise you to turn it over in my mind, hoping that it will not be long before we

shall have another conversation on the same subject; for I see plainly that there is something to be learned from you, Philip, which I not only did not know before, but of which I really had not even a remote idea.

Philip. I wish, Thomas, I had been able to give you some better account of the Pope than the present occasion has permitted; but you will remember that I have endeavoured only to answer your questions, so as to carry you along with me, so far step by step. And now, before we part, I must beg you by no means to run away with the notion that the Pope is no more to the Church than merely the supreme judge. The Pope, according to the decree of the Council of Florence, is the supreme ruler and doctor of the whole Church. The Bulls, instituting the Bishops in their sees, come from him. If a general council has to be called, it is he who summons it together, who presides in it, and who afterwards ratifies its acts. It appertains to him to judge of all doctrines; condemning some, and approving of others. His laws bind the whole Church; and he holds the keys to exclude all bad and contumacious Christians from the communion of the Church, and to readmit them on their submission. It belongs to him also to canonise Saints, and to assign them their place in the Church calendar. So that you may see pretty plainly, Thomas, if we had attempted to speak of all these questions, which again would not have exhausted the subject, we should only have lost ourselves. Thus it was well that we kept to our one particular point,—the person of the living judge, the Vicegerent of the same Jesus Christ, whose Godhead St. Peter confessed, whom the Christian society requires to the end of the world,

and whom we Roman Catholics say can be no one else except the Pope of Rome.

Thomas. Well, Philip, we have at least mastered this one point in such a manner that I have a great respect for all you have said; and, God willing, I shall be most ready to listen to the sequel of your story, at some future time. What do you say to my proposal, that you come and sit with me to-morrow afternoon in my garden, and I will promise you to have all intruders effectually excluded? In the mean time, all honour to the man that planted the good old oak which has given us this agreeable shade and resting-place. Farewell, noble old tree! I shall long bear a pleasant memory of our morning's session under your shade. You are certainly an emblem in nature of the durability of the Papacy, of which we have now been talking under your branches.

Philip. Have you your school-days, Thomas, sufficiently in memory to call to mind the lines of Horace, that, under the description of an oak, almost look as if they had had some glimmering presentiment of the future Papacy, which seems as if it might be all but understood to be prefigured by them?

“Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus,
Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido,
Per damna, per cædes ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro.”

IV. *Od. iv.*

Thomas. Come and visit me in my garden to-morrow afternoon, Philip, and see if I do not furbish up some classical quotation to be a match for yours.

[*They shake hands and part.*]

DIALOGUE THIRD.

THE RIGHT OF ALL MEN TO INQUIRE ; OR SELF-INTEREST
POINTS OUT TO EVERY ONE THE FOLLY OF NEGLECTING
TO INFORM THEMSELVES RESPECTING THE ADVANTAGES
OFFERED THEM BY THE CHURCH OF ROME, AND CAU-
TIONS THEM TO TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED TO THE
CONTRARY.

SCENE : *A summer afternoon in MR. THOMAS GOODMAN'S garden
in East Sheen. THOMAS and PHILIP are seated in the shade.*

PHILIP points out to THOMAS that the question about which he is
inquiring concerns himself far more nearly than any one else ;
and he shows him that, while he ought by no means to omit, as
a pious man, to pray for light and guidance from God, no-
thing forbids him, as a wise prudent man, from making the
most searching inquiry that he can into the truth of all that
the Church of Rome offers to him.

Thomas. Yesterday, Philip, we had a long, and to
me most interesting, session under our oak-tree in
Richmond Park, discussing together the grandeur
and stability of the Papal power ; and if we had had
a fancy to wind up by trying what sort of a life the
primitive condition of men was,—when, according to
the ideas of the pagan philosophers of Horace's time
(whom our own wise men appear to be able to do no
more than just *réécho*), men began by being a

“ Mutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter
Unguibus et pugnis, dein fustibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant armis” (Sat. i. 3. 100),

—we should have found acorns enough for our ex-

periment. However, to-day, Philip, I propose that you shall see what modern market-gardening is able to produce in the way of improvement upon acorns; and I mean to try to find my old friend Philip a welcome upon a little more of the Virgilian pattern,—

“Ipse ego cana legam tenerâ lanugine mala
Castaneasque nuces, mea quas Amaryllis amabat :
Addam cerea pruna, honos erit huic quoque pomo.”

Eclogue ii.

If only my poor Amaryllis, Mrs. Goodman, were living, she would have been delighted, Philip, to have roasted us a plate of chestnuts with her own hands, while she left me to profit exclusively by all you are going to say. However, our maxim in the City used to be, “business first, and pleasure afterwards.” So here you now are, Philip, with the whole evening before you, in which to convert me if you can.

Philip. You raise, Thomas, not a few scruples in my mind about proceeding on the terms you appear to me to propose; and I am not quite sure that we understand each other as clearly as it would be desirable that we should do. You say to me, Thomas, “Here is the whole evening before you, in which to convert me if you can.” Do you, then, by any chance mean by this that you are going to propose to me that we should play at a sort of game together, in which, if I succeed in converting you, I shall be the winner; but if you can escape without being converted, you will be the winner? If this be what is latent in your mind, Thomas, it is pretty plain that I had better cry forfeit at once, and give up the game; for on these terms the play would be altogether in

your own hands ; since the moment, Thomas, you felt any strong objection to lose your game, you would only have to choose not to be converted ; and then your game would be the same as if it were already won.

Thomas. What has put such a notion as this into your head, Philip,—that I am proposing to you a game of this kind ?

Philip. I have often noticed, Thomas, a propensity in those who talk about the Roman Catholic religion to suffer themselves to fall into a way of thinking that, because Roman Catholics sometimes show a great deal of eagerness and pertinacity in desiring to convert other people to their religion, it is the person desiring to make the proselyte who alone has any thing to gain by succeeding ; while the poor proselyte himself, or herself, is supposed to have little, or rather nothing at all, to gain beyond being made into a kind of good-natured victim to gratify the desire of the party eager for the conversion. Now, as you seem to be calling upon me to follow you patiently through a long and laborious inquiry, it appeared only prudent for me, Thomas, to draw you out, and to try whether you might not, perchance, have some feeling of this kind latent in your mind ; for if it were there, it is one that could very easily render all our labour barren of any result.

Thomas. I am not aware that I have any such feeling as this in my mind, Philip ; I think, if I at all know myself, that I have told you the true state of the case. I really want, as far as I can venture to speak, plainly and honestly to be better informed about the Roman Catholic religion than I am ; and

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this with the genuine purpose of seeing if I could not be converted to it.

Philip. But still, Thomas, you can hardly be under so erroneous an impression as to suppose that all mankind were meant to be brought to the true religion by no other than the laborious way of their sitting down, as you seem to propose that we should now do, to examine into the whole matter,—to argue and to reason the entire case out, step by step. For this, Thomas, looks like dragging men into embracing religion almost, one by one, by the hair of their heads and in spite of themselves; in which there really seems to be something scarcely natural. For the prevailing idea of the true religion, Thomas, is that of the most perfect society in the world, into which it is the highest possible grace and favour to be able to be received, on account of the superior advantages that are to be gained in it, and that are not to be gained any where else. And you remember, no doubt, how the mere word of a little maid of the house of Israel sufficed to send the Syrian lord Naaman up to Jerusalem, to seek the presence of the prophet Eliseus. And besides this, far fewer men than you suppose, Thomas, are ever really moved, at least directly, by the long trains of thought and reasoning that you seem to think we ought now to set ourselves to work out together.

Thomas. Well but, Philip, you have, I hope, no objection to satisfy me by answering my questions; and you are surely not saying what you now say only to make a loophole for yourself by which to escape away from me?

Philip. Oh no, Thomas. If you have really made

up your mind for the investigation, and if you prefer this to any of the shorter ways, by all means we will pursue it together and work it out. However, the indispensable condition of our being able to do this with any profit will be, that you should first clearly understand that all ways—the long as well as the short—lead to one and the same issue, viz. that in the end a man must make his own choice, and determine for himself, seeing that the question mainly concerns himself, whether he will or will not embrace the particular religion which he is considering.

The case is, in not a few respects, extremely similar to the question which most men at one time or another either have had, or contemplate shortly having, to put before themselves, viz. whether they mean to be married or to live single. If a man makes up his mind to be married, we all know the process. He must positively determine which lady he will choose; he must next obtain her consent, if he can; and this being done, he must appear, on the appointed day and hour, in the church for the nuptial ceremony; and then he becomes a married man, entitled to all the social joys of matrimony. It is as nearly as possible in many respects the same with the choice of a religion. A man must make his choice of the particular communion; he must appear to his appointment, to be received; and then, if the Church of Rome has been his choice, his reception being accomplished, he is a member of the Roman Catholic society, entitled to all the social blessings that the Church of Rome is able to give to its members, and to all the charity and good offices of his new brethren in the faith.

Thomas. I like what you say very much, Philip.

It shows me that the Roman Catholic religion, at least, does not appear to build itself on the destruction of the human reason at all, in the way in which I have always been told that it did. Your notion then is, Philip, that when men make up their minds to be Roman Catholics, they should have the same intelligible reasons for their choice, as they should have when they make up their minds to be married ; which, I suppose, is much the same thing as saying, that they should make themselves Roman Catholics, with a view to find greater happiness in the present life, by coming into the society and life of the Church of Rome, than any which they possessed before.

Philip. You are certainly right, Thomas, to a very great extent, though you can hardly be said, I think, to have got hold of the whole truth yet. Have you never remarked, Thomas, that there plainly seems to be something much deeper in the question, " Shall I, or shall I not, join the Roman Catholic communion?" than there is in any other single question that a man can lawfully put before himself? Ordinarily speaking, a man may make up his mind to quit his country, his family, and friends, for scenes of distant danger, from which the overwhelming chances are that he will never return alive, without any thing approaching to the inward strife which the simple question, " Shall I join the Church of Rome?" is capable of occasioning. This fact of itself, Thomas, certainly goes a very great way to show that, without its at all ceasing to be a human thing, in all respects perfectly belonging to our present life, yet still there is also associated with the human resolve to join the Roman Catholic Church something besides that is vastly above

the order of things merely human. Consequently, Thomas, if no ordinarily good and pious man would think he did well to make choice of any lady to be his partner for life, without previously asking of God, in humble prayer, to be guided and directed in his choice, how much more ought a sober-minded and pious man, who is deliberating about the entry into a new religious communion, to offer his most earnest prayers that he may be guided and directed aright in his approaching choice by the light and wisdom that God alone can give to men !

Thomas. Then am I now to understand you, Philip, to intimate that we are here sitting together, I to listen, and you to expound, like a learned doctor of divinity, all to no purpose ; and that we should be much better employed if we were both of us, at the present moment, upon our knees, praying to God for the light and grace which, if it were given, would end the matter under debate in a much more speedy and royal manner ?

Philip. There is very little doubt, Thomas, but that this might be very much the better way ; yet, nevertheless, if I were now to propose to you that we should begin at once to go down upon our knees, perhaps you might not be altogether prepared to commence doing this. I suppose the truth is, that Almighty God in His mercy takes men as they are, and seeks to bring them to His truth by ways to which they are ready to consent themselves. We do not ever read of St. Paul acting the missionary on the principle of merely exhorting men to pray to be converted. He plainly understood that there were immense numbers of men in the world to be gained

over to the doctrines which he taught, by other, and much less mystic, means than those of light and guidance given directly from above. For example: St. Paul was found disputing daily while he was at Ephesus, in the school of one Tyrannus (Acts xix. 9). And a man like St. Paul would certainly not have been found frittering away the time of his apostleship in mere disputes, if he had known beforehand that they must necessarily be barren of results. At Ephesus, no doubt, there were numerous Greeks, who were well acquainted with the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and the other Greek philosophers of repute; and we plainly see that St. Paul, instead of recommending men of this stamp to betake themselves to prayers, which they most likely would not have known how to begin, and certainly not how to have kept up for any length of time, did not consider it in any way beneath the dignity of his apostleship to come and meet them on their own ground, in one of their own schools, and to join with them in fairly reasoning and arguing-out his own case before them with all the dialectic tact which Greeks so much loved, and in which they were themselves such proficient.

Thomas. Then, Philip, if I now understand you, you, after all, are not so very averse to my taking up an attitude of doubt towards what you say; and you do not insist upon that immediate and unconditional surrender which I have always been told that the Church of Rome made a point of invariably demanding.

Philip. I cannot quite say, Thomas, what an Apostle might demand from you, if it were an Apostle who was preaching to you; but you must not forget I am

only your friend, and not entitled to do more than answer your questions, in the best way I am able.

Thomas. Then, Philip, do you mean to tell me that, besides not directly destroying the human reason, the Roman Catholic Church builds its faith directly upon the foundation of right human reason, in such a manner, that the better men have learned to regulate their thoughts and actions according to right reason, the better they will be disposed to come of their own accord to embrace the Roman Catholic faith? You would say, I presume, Philip, that there is no such thing practised by the Roman Catholics as hoodwinking the natural reason, in order the better to gain proselytes for your Church; and that men always remain free to embrace the Roman Catholic faith, or not, as they think proper.

Philip. Thomas, St. Paul speaks only of a "reasonable obedience" (Rom. xii. 1); and nothing in his whole career shows that he understood that the doctrines which he taught had repealed the original law of the Creation, in which God "constituted man in society, and left him in the hands of his own counsel" (Ecclus. xv. 14). But we may form an idea of the importance St. Paul attached to men being persuaded freely to embrace the apostolic doctrines, by hearing him say that, for the sake of gaining his brethren the Jews, he wished to be himself anathema from Christ (Rom. ix. 3).

Thomas. I like what you say, Philip, very much. I understand you now that a man is constituted perfectly free to please himself whether he will be a Roman Catholic or not.

Philip. Do not misunderstand my words, Thomas.

Because a man has the power put into his hands to make both a good choice and a bad choice, I by no means say that therefore the right reason which God has given to him does not most plainly dictate to him to make the good choice in preference to the bad choice. Right reason even does more than this: it not only prescribes the general rule, "to choose the good, and to avoid the evil;" but to some extent when it is as yet only natural reason, and of course still more when it is enlightened by Divine grace, it says, "Choose *this* side, because it is good; and avoid *that* side, because *it is bad*."

Thomas. Then, Philip, the long and short of your showing is, that though men have the power given into their hands to please themselves as to what they will choose, nevertheless right reason most plainly says to them, "Choose the Roman Catholic Communion, because it is the very best choice that you can possibly make, and the choice by which you have the most to gain."

Philip. Perfectly right, Thomas; this is exactly what I do say. But I should also not omit to add, that while considering the disordered state of the whole society of the world, and the immense multitude of causes which all, in the most opposite ways, tend to instil errors and wrong judgments into people's minds, and taking into consideration the singular force of early prejudices, right reason may be fairly said to allow a considerable period for doubt and consideration, if unhappily it should be required; still, on the other hand, it most plainly opposes any thing like a timid and unworthy halting between two sides, and the not having the courage to carry a resolve

into practice after it has been inwardly resolved upon. What do we usually think, Thomas, of the poor booby, whom his friends have fully persuaded that he ought to settle himself in life and look out for a wife, and who yet continues shilly-shallying and hesitating solely because he has not the courage to make up his mind as to the choice of the particular lady? Right reason, Thomas, most plainly dictates to men, that the time must come when they will be called upon to cut short their deliberations, and to make their choice like men,—as St. Paul says, “not fluctuating like children” (Ephes. iv. 14).

Thomas. I think I now perfectly understand you, Philip; and as I hope I am not deceiving myself in the belief that I am quite prepared not to halt between two sides, but to proceed to make the best possible choice that I shall be able to make upon the reasons that will be laid before me, so I beg you to proceed with your promised answers, and to explain to me still further what it is that attaches you so firmly to the Roman Catholic religion. For, as I have a high opinion, Philip, of your judgment and good sense, I cannot help being somewhat favourably disposed to think that the things which are the cause of your attachment to this religion must be both according to right reason and also very proper to persuade me to embrace it, if I were only better informed about them.

Philip. With all my heart, Thomas; let us proceed. But still let me call to your mind an admonition from the words of the prophet Jeremias, that may usefully apply to your case: “I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not his own; neither is it of a man’s self to walk, and to direct his steps” (Jer. x. 23).

Thomas. Your counsel is good, and I must try not to neglect it; but, in the mean time, you must have something nearer home, Philip, than the Pope, on which your mind rests with the satisfaction and delight that you have described. Tell me what it is, and I will endeavour to listen to you with the greatest attention.

Philip. The chief business, Thomas, of a religious communion, and the one in which its people have the greatest stake and interest, is of course the worship of God in its solemn and public assemblies; and therefore the most rational thing for me now to speak to you about is our mode of worshiping God in public in the Roman Catholic Church. But to do this properly we must enter quietly together into the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the New Law, which we commonly call the Mass, and which is offered, as a rule, every day on the altars of the Roman Catholic churches, and at which Roman Catholics are required to assist on Sundays and holidays as a matter of duty, and on other days voluntarily, as far as leisure enables them and devotion prompts them. But as this will be somewhat of a study for us, Thomas, we had better break our subject here by a walk round your garden; during which, as "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7), you can bring any of these famous apples, plums, and other fruit of yours, that you like, into court, that it may be seen if they bear out your description of them.

[They walk together round Mr. Goodman's garden.]

DIALOGUE FOURTH.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS, AND THE EXTERNAL
SPLENDOUR OF THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

SCENE: MR. THOMAS GOODMAN'S garden in East Sheen.

PHILIP *explains the doctrine of an unbloody Sacrifice, instituted by Jesus Christ, to be continually offered, in memory of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross; and points out to him the unfailing life and charm of the social worship of the Church of Rome, founded on the continual offering of this Sacrifice.*

Thomas. Explain to me, Philip, what I am to understand by this Sacrifice of the Mass, that you tell me is offered up nearly every day in all your churches; for, to confess to you the honest truth, I have scarcely any intelligible notion as to what it is that you can possibly mean. We who have been in business all know what it is to be obliged every now and then to make a sacrifice of one customer to another, and we know occasionally what it is to be made into victims ourselves; but as for a religious sacrifice, such as you inform me is offered up in all your Roman Catholic churches,—that is to say, one that has been offered this very day, and will, in the ordinary course of things, be offered again to-morrow,—this is something that I never heard of before in my whole life. Indeed, I have always hitherto understood by sacrifices in religion things that were superstitiously practised by heathens and idolaters; such things, in short, as are offered in British India to Juggernaut, and such as from time to time we

read accounts of in the newspapers as being practised by the Negro King Dahomey and others.

Philip. It is, perhaps, a little fortunate for you, Thomas, that we are not disputing in any formal way against each other; for you would now have given me a very great advantage over you, in asking where it was that you had been brought up, that you come to have no better idea than the one you acknowledge of what a sacrifice in religion means. But as you honestly tell me that such is the case, let us see what conclusion we can come to by quietly examining the subject together. You say to me, Thomas, that the use of the word "sacrifice" in business is quite familiar to you; and I suppose an example of what you mean would be something of the following kind: A, who is an iron-master, has executed a large order of a particular kind of iron for B. C, who is another customer of A, sees the iron before it is delivered to B, and wishes to have it. C is importunate, and easily offended, and, moreover, a very important customer; while B is much more mild and placid. Therefore, in order to retain his hold of C, A lets him have the iron that has been made to the order of B, and makes B suffer the inconvenience of waiting until a similar second quantity of the kind of iron which B requires can be produced; and this in business is what you would call sacrificing B to C. I suppose, Thomas, there is nothing of the nature of any thing sacred in this kind of a sacrifice?

Thomas. Certainly not, Philip; nothing sacred at all, rather the reverse; only such things cannot always be helped.

Philip. But if there is nothing of a sacred nature

in the procedure above mentioned, how is it that a word borrowed from religion, where it is used entirely to express something sacred, has come to be applied to it?

— *Thomas.* Do you explain this, Philip, and I will listen.

Philip. It can only have come to pass from the circumstance that the word "sacrifice" in religion bears so well-known a meaning, that even when it is transferred into commerce, stripped of every vestige of any thing sacred, it still expresses what is wanted better than any other word possibly could do. Thus, in the example we have supposed, the basis of the peace and friendship that has been entered into between A and C is really the suffering and inconvenience which B has been made to endure for the sake of accommodating C; and in all their future relations, A will desire that C should always bear a lively remembrance of the inconvenience which he has made B suffer on his (C's) account, as the best proof of the sincerity of the desire which A has to oblige C. These, Thomas, in substance, are the main ideas of the great Christian Sacrifice of the Cross: (I.) the death that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered upon the cross at the command of the Eternal Father, which is the basis of the restored peace between the ever-blessed Trinity and the whole family of Adam; and (II.) the desire of the ever-blessed Trinity that the whole family of Adam should for ever perpetuate and keep up the liveliest remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, as the proof of the good-will and mercy borne by the ever-blessed Trinity to the whole family of Adam.

Thomas. Proceed, Philip ; for I listen to you most willingly.

Philip. Then, Thomas, you must perceive that we have now come to the question, what is to be the appointed manner for keeping up in the minds of all men the most lively possible remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ's precious death upon the cross. We will leave the answer to this question for the present, and we will go to another question, also a most important one in its own way ; and then you must prepare, Thomas, for a most beautiful and delightful surprise in learning how the answers to both questions will meet and coincide on one and the same thing.

Thomas. Proceed, Philip ; for I am quite desirous to hear what you will say.

Philip. You must try and give me your attention as well as you can, especially since you acknowledge that the subject of a sacrifice is something so very new to you. As a good man and as a pious Christian, Thomas, in spite of what you have told me of the habit you have latterly fallen into of sitting at home to read your Bible by yourself, you will admit that besides the prayers which men should offer to God in secret, it is part of our duty to God, and unquestionably the channel of many choice blessings to ourselves, that there should be general public assemblies of all the people for the solemn worship of God in common. I am sure you will acknowledge, Thomas, that the cold, lonely isolation of a man from his fellow-men in the worship of God, his keeping himself apart from the joys and inspirations which the being one of a large multitude always produces, is not according

to our nature; but that, on the contrary, the social nature which we have received from our Divine Creator is always impelling us, to the best of our ability, to seek the society of our fellow-men for the solemn worship of God in common; and that consequently the poet who has written these lines has spoken the true universal voice of human nature:

“ Oh, sweeter than the marriage-feast,—
 ’Tis sweeter far to me,—
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company.

To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,—
 Old men and babes and loving friends,
 And youths and maidens gay.”
The Ancient Mariner.

I see from your looks that you assent to all this. Now, Thomas, assenting to this, do you think it is agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God that He should do nothing for the Christian people whom He has redeemed by His death on the cross, to render their public worship so attractive and so honourable, as that they should be for ever indebted to Him for a gift available for their solemn assemblies for His worship, to the virtue and value of which gift nothing that they could possibly provide for themselves could make the most distant approach?

Thomas. I see nothing but what is in the highest degree reasonable in such a proposition. St. Paul tells us to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts xx. 35); so I suppose that He would certainly practise His own doctrine, and be therefore ready to

give to the solemn assemblies of the Christian people for their public worship the best gift that He could possibly give them.

Philip. Now, Thomas, have you any idea yourself of the kind of gift Jesus Christ might be expected to give?

Thomas. No, Philip; I honestly confess I have not the least notion. I should take it for granted it would be the best; but what it would be, I cannot imagine. I hope you are not going to say "long discourses."

Philip. What do you think, Thomas, of a "sacrifice"?

Thomas. Philip, whether I am to be blamed or not for having had what you would call a hole-and-corner education, I do not know; but the whole subject of a sacrifice is as new to me as any thing can possibly be. A sense of religion forbids me to laugh at it, or to be profane about it; but, to tell you the honest truth, I never heard any one speak of such a thing seriously before; and therefore the utmost that I can now say is, that I am ready to listen to all that you have to say to me.

Philip. When we speak of a sacrifice in Divine worship, Thomas, we are to be understood to speak of something that is tangible and subject to the senses, and which is offered to God by men, according to some becoming ceremonial, in token of their subjection to Him. Listen to the words, Thomas, of a namesake of yours,—whose faith I hope to see you end by embracing,—St. Thomas of Aquin, the great Church-doctor of the 13th century: "It is suitable to "man," writes St. Thomas, "that he should use sensible signs for the expression of certain things; be-

“ cause it is his nature to receive knowledge from
“ things that are subject to his senses; and therefore
“ it proceeds from natural reason, that a man should
“ make use of certain of the things that are subject
“ to his senses, in the worship of God, offering them
“ to God in token of the subjection and the honour
“ that is due by him to God, after the manner of
“ those who offer certain things to their masters, in
“ recognition of their lordship. This appertains to
“ the rational account that is to be given of sacrifice;
“ and the worship by sacrifice thus understood forms
“ a part of the natural law.”* Have you any thing to
say, Thomas, against the words of this great Church-
doctor?

Thomas. As I have said, Philip, the subject is altogether new to me; but if paying a peppercorn annual rent for holding a mill or other tenement be a rational mode, as I suppose it is, of acknowledging the right of property vested in the person who receives the peppercorn, I can see no reason why the offering of some suitable and tangible thing to God should not be a rational mode of acknowledging the supreme dominion of God over all that He has created. The only question is, can it be known that God Himself accepts such offerings?

Philip. How can a reader of the Scriptures, such as you are, doubt this for a moment?

Thomas. Well, Philip, now that you fairly and seriously call my attention to the subject, a new light seems to burst upon me. I see very plainly that the Scripture notion of worshiping God is as nearly as possible altogether confined to such sacri-

* St. Thomas, 2da 2dæ, qu. 84, art. 1.

fices as your great Church-doctor speaks of; but I have always been brought up under the notion that the sacrifices mentioned in Scripture were only shadows of the great Sacrifice of the Divine Victim on the Cross; and that when this Sacrifice was once accomplished, all the figurative sacrifices of the Hebrew people naturally disappeared, from the circumstance that they were no longer required.

Philip. The subject is so new to you, Thomas, that before you perplex yourself with any more difficulties, which are only difficulties in consequence of your not having the necessary knowledge and information, let me read to you, before we advance any farther, the whole doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church on the subject of the Sacrifice of the New Law,—or as we more commonly say, the Mass,—as this is laid down in the decree of the Council of Trent.

“Seeing,” so runs the decree of this Council, “that
“under the former covenant, according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul, by reason of the weakness
“of the Levitical priesthood, there was not a perfect
“service (*consummatio non erat*), it was necessary (God,
“the father of mercies, so ordering it) that another
“Priest should rise up, according to the order of
“Melchisedech,—OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,—who
“should be able to consummate, and bring to perfection, all—as many as were to be sanctified. He,
“therefore, our God and our Lord,—although He was
“afterwards about to offer Himself to God the Father,
“by His death, once on the altar of the Cross, that He
“might there work out an eternal redemption,—nevertheless, for the reason that His Priesthood was not
“to be annulled by His death, in the Last Supper,

“ on the night when He was betrayed, in order that
“ He might leave to His beloved Spouse, the Church,
“ a *visible sacrifice*, such as the nature of men re-
“ quires, by which the bloody Sacrifice that was to
“ be once for all accomplished on the Cross might be
“ represented, and its memory be kept up to the end
“ of time, as also in order that its salutary efficacy
“ might be applied to the remission of the sins
“ which are daily committed by us,—He declaring
“ Himself to be constituted a Priest for ever, after
“ the order of Melchisedech,—offered His Body and
“ Blood under the species of bread and wine, and
“ gave them under the symbols of the same things
“ to His Apostles, to be taken by them; He consti-
“ tuting them at that moment to be priests of the
“ New Covenant, and commanding them and their
“ successors in the priesthood to continue to offer
“ them, using these words, ‘Do this for the keeping
“ Me in remembrance,’—as the Catholic Church has
“ always understood and taught. For after He had
“ celebrated the old Pasch, which the multitude of
“ the children of Israel sacrificed in memory of their
“ escape out of Egypt, He instituted a new Pasch,—to
“ wit, Himself,—to be offered by the Church, through
“ the ministry of the priests, under visible symbols,
“ in memory of His passage out of this world to His
“ Father; when He redeemed us by the shedding
“ of His blood, and delivered us from the powers
“ of darkness, and translated us into His kingdom.
“ And this is that ‘pure oblation,’ which cannot be
“ stained by any unworthiness or malice of those who
“ offer it; which the Lord foretold by His prophet
“ Malachias was to be offered a clean offering in every

“ place to His name, which was to become great
“ among the Gentiles (Malachias i. 11); and which
“ oblation the Apostle Paul by no means obscurely
“ indicates, when, writing to the Corinthians, he says,
“ that they who are polluted by the partaking of the
“ table of the devils cannot be partakers of the table
“ of the Lord,—in either case understanding the altar
“ by the word ‘table.’ This, in a word, is the sacri-
“ fice which was figured under the similitudes of the
“ various sacrifices that were offered both before the
“ law and under the law; comprehending in itself
“ all the good things that were signified by them, as
“ being their consummation and perfection” (Sess.
xxii., of the *Sacrifice of the Mass*).

You see now, Thomas, from these words of the Council of Trent, nothing can be more august, and of more inestimable value, than the Victim who is offered in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, who is no other than Jesus Christ Himself under the forms of the bread and the wine. And now you have before you the delightful surprise for which I told you to be prepared. You now see how the wisdom of God has provided for the memory of the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross being kept up in the minds of men as long as the world shall last, and how the Christian assemblies for public worship have at the same time received the gift of a sacrifice, the value of which nothing can equal.

Thomas. You were quite right in telling me to prepare for a pleasant and most delightful surprise. I am indeed astonished at a doctrine I never heard explained before; and I like what you say extremely. I now plainly see that the offering of sacrifice is the old im-

memorial way of the solemn worship of God, which it is plain from the Scriptures must have been taught by God Himself to men from the very beginning. What I want, however, to hear you, Philip, explain to me now is, how a sacrifice should be found subsisting after the great Sacrifice of the Cross has been once for all accomplished. As I have said, I have always been brought up in the notion that this one great Sacrifice abolished all the figurative sacrifices that may have existed before.

Philip. You are quite right, Thomas ; it has abolished them. all

Thomas. Then in this case, how do you come to speak of a sacrifice still subsisting, if you say they are all abolished by the Sacrifice of the Cross ?

Philip. That all the former sacrifices, which served to prefigure the death of our Lord on the Cross, are necessarily abolished now that this precious death has been accomplished, by no means contradicts the doctrine that Jesus Christ, being a Priest after the order of Melchisedech, should have instituted, as the Council of Trent lays down, a New Sacrifice, with the intent that the offering of this new sacrifice should, among other purposes, serve that of keeping up the perpetual remembrance of His precious death upon the Cross. Have we not already seen that it belongs to the nature of the great Sacrifice of the Cross that its remembrance should be kept up ? And if you admit this, will you not allow our Lord Himself to be the best judge what is the most effectual way of providing for the remembrance of His sacrifice upon the Cross being kept up for all generations ?

Thomas. Certainly, Philip ; but you must not be

too hard upon me, for I only want to learn the truth.

Philip. I did not intend to be so very hard upon you, Thomas. Let us only proceed fully to understand our subject. You have admitted that our Lord may be expected to have a most loving and tender consideration for the assemblies of His people when they meet together for their public worship, and that He would give them the very best gift that He could possibly give them, to render their assemblies in the highest degree honourable, and to impart such a lasting charm to them as would enable all the Christian people to say at all times from their inmost hearts: "I was glad when they said to me, We will go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. cxxi.). Now do you think, Thomas, that with this purpose in view He could give them any more precious gift than Himself?

Thomas. It would be a plain impiety to say that any thing could be greater than Himself.

Philip. Then, Thomas, if the Roman Catholic Church is able to offer on her altars the very and true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, you must admit that our Church offers to the holy and blessed Trinity a more acceptable worship than any thing else that can possibly be conceived.

Thomas. I see now, Philip, plainly enough to what you have been bringing me step by step; and I must cheerfully admit that, if this doctrine of which you have been giving me an account be the truth, and if the sacrifice of which you speak be really offered on the altars of the Roman Catholic churches, then it is indeed the most perfect worship that can possibly be offered to God; for nothing in our world can be

understood to bear any comparison, in point of value, as an oblation that is to be offered to God, with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. If, therefore, the Roman Catholic Church does really possess the power of offering upon her altars so unspeakably great and august a sacrifice, then I must admit, Philip, that the worship of the Roman Catholic Church must be held to surpass all other attempts that men, even as Christians, make to worship God, as heaven is above the earth; because nothing else upon earth can be compared, for a single moment, with the Body of Jesus Christ. There is certainly no wonder, Philip, that those who are opposed to the Roman Catholic Church should be industrious in denying its possession of such a treasure. I only wish now to learn from you, Philip, how you will be able to prove to me that this doctrine of your Church is true; for I must honestly confess that I feel a sincere desire to be able to believe it.

Philip. We had better reserve this point for our next meeting, Thomas; when we will endeavour carefully to examine together the question what the right reason of men points out to be requisite, in order to enable them to receive and put faith in the doctrines of revelation. In the mean time, Thomas, let me make a remark, which I hope will not be without its value to you, and of which you will, I think, easily perceive and admit the truth. The Roman Catholic Church is very commonly reproached with cultivating to excess a gorgeous and theatrical style of public worship, the object of which, its calumniators say, is merely to please and captivate the senses of the multitude. Whether here and there some blamable excesses may not crop out in the management of particular

Roman Catholic churches,—perfectly possible as this may be,—does not touch the question. The objection to the Roman Catholic worship to which I am alluding, would be by no means satisfied by the very largest and most liberal admissions that could be made as to the local abuses that characterise particular churches. The objectors seek to strike directly at the root of all the pomp and magnificence of the Roman Catholic ritual; and they will be satisfied by nothing short of its total abolition, as a thing essentially contrary to the simplicity of the Gospel. Now this abolition, Thomas, of the becoming splendour and ceremonial of the Roman Catholic worship is that which can never be conceded to objectors as long as ever the world shall last; and the reason, as you will not fail to perceive, is undeniably just. The utmost possible outward splendour and dignity essentially becomes the worship in which so priceless a sacrifice as that of the Mass is offered to God. Apart, indeed, from the possession of this sacrifice, the objection in question may be readily admitted to be just and rational; and those who do not believe in the doctrine of the unbloody sacrifice, which Jesus Christ has instituted to keep up the perpetual remembrance of His death on the cross, raise their objection on their own grounds very reasonably, and are even quite consistent in making it. But in the same manner, the Roman Catholic Church, believing in her own possession of this priceless gift, is equally consistent in surrounding the offering of this inestimable sacrifice with every thing that is honourable and precious among men,—with glorious buildings, jewelled chalices, rich vestments, decorous ceremonial, multitude of assistants, appropriate music, and

every thing whose nature it is to draw forth from her people the exclamation of the Psalmist: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth" (Ps. xxv. 8).

Thomas. I have learned so much this afternoon, Philip, that I never heard before in all my life, that I shall require a little time to reflect upon it, and to turn it over in my mind; but I hope we shall meet again very soon. Will you, then, have the charity, Philip, to come and sit with me quietly on Sunday afternoon next, and we will pursue the subject you have just mentioned,—viz. the question, what it is that enables men to accept the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and to find all the joy and peace in believing them which you plainly appear to possess?

Philip. With all my heart, Thomas. God willing, I will come and spend next Sunday afternoon with you. In the mean time, I shall pray for you according to the best of my abilities, and ask some pious people whom I know to do the same; for without prayer we shall not advance very much with the work that we have undertaken.

DIALOGUE FIFTH.

THE ONE APOSTOLIC RELIGION WHICH INVITES ALL ALIKE
TO ENTER ITS COMMUNION.

SCENE: *A sitting-room in MR. THOMAS GOODMAN'S house.*

PHILIP *explains to THOMAS how the necessity came to arise for one apostolic religion to be sent into the world, whose mission it is to teach one way of salvation to all men, and in consequence to invite all men to desert every other religion in order to enter its communion.*

Thomas. I have been carefully turning over in my thoughts, Philip, all that we have hitherto spoken of together, and I must cheerfully acknowledge the deep impression which it has made upon my mind. You have clearly shown me, Philip, that the invitation to enter the communion of the Church of Rome is not an invitation to be mixed up with a mere unimportant hole-and-corner association, but with a wonderfully organised society, that has been able to spread itself over the whole world. And however true it may be that the net of St. Peter succeeds in catching an immense number of the poor and the miserable, and even of the scandalous, people amongst its fishes, still so long as the Pope remains in Rome, the Roman Catholic religion continues to be visibly exalted in the sight of all the nations above every thing else in the world. You remember the lines, Philip, in which Horace challenges the Sun himself to say that

he knew of nothing in the world greater than the city of Rome :

“ In all thy wanderings may'st thou nothing view
That mightier is than Rome,—

‘The empress of the world, our mother and our home !’

*Martin's translation.**

Whatever, then, people may choose to say of the injurious influence of the system of the Church of Rome upon the minds of the Roman Catholics themselves, nobody can refuse to admit but that a religion that rules the whole world from the city of Rome raises those who profess it to a position of great honour and nobility before the eyes of the world,—always understanding by the world the entire circle of nations, whatever may become of the little narrow local world of a man's own immediate nation and neighbourhood. And for my part, Philip, I fully own the force of this consideration as regards myself; for I do not think I could ever have been brought to mix myself up with any thing like a mean and hugging-mugger society. Moreover, as regards the account you have given me of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the holy Sacrifice of the New Law, as a Divine institution for the perpetuation of the memory of the great Sacrifice of the Cross from day to day, I look around me in vain for any thing else in the way of a standing daily memorial of the great Sacrifice of the Cross that will sustain a moment's comparison with the daily

* “ Alme sol, curru nitido diem qui
Promis et celas, aliusque et idem
Nasceris, possis nihil urbe Romæ
Visere majus.”

Carmen Seculare.

Masses that are celebrated in the Roman Catholic churches throughout the world; and my heart seems also to whisper to me that no other worship of God can be compared to it. Not only, judging from what I remember to have myself seen and heard in Roman Catholic churches, does it not exclude the psalms, hymns, and prayers of other modes of worshipping God (while, from what you say, it must be itself distinct from and superior to them), but it admits all these things as its natural accompaniment, and must certainly add a new charm to them, which they cannot have apart from it.

Philip. Bravo, Thomas! I shall begin to think you a most hopeful person, if we can only continue to make progress in this manner.

Thomas. I quite feel, Philip, that I ought to try to give you some satisfaction, as not being altogether insensible to the pains you have hitherto taken with me; and being thus already within the fascination, I have now to come to you to learn what it is that makes you believe these doctrines so firmly as to be able to find all the peace and joy in believing them, which you plainly appear to possess. This you will at once see, Philip, is by no means an unimportant step in the business we have undertaken; for, from the great respect I have for your judgment, I hope to be brought so much further on my way to believe these doctrines myself after I shall have learned what the grounds are on which you continue to believe them.

Philip. The way, Thomas, by which I first came to believe these doctrines was as simple and ordinary as can possibly be. I had the blessing to have a Catholic father and mother, who took care to have me

baptised, and diligently brought up to know and practise all the duties of my religion; and they afterwards provided for my being suitably instructed in the doctrines which they themselves had taught me to believe as a little child.

Thomas. Well, but, Philip, I want to know how you can call this giving me a reasonable answer to my question. For this is only exactly the same thing that every horrible and hobgoblin superstition besides, throughout the whole world, appears to be able to accomplish equally well with your religion. The child of Mahometan parents is brought without the least difficulty to believe Mahomet to be a prophet, and to receive the Koran; the child of Hindus is reared without an effort to go on a pilgrimage to the Ganges or to the temple of Juggernaut; and the child of Chinese parents is just as easily taught to adore Buddha. Now surely it must follow, if you believe the Roman Catholic doctrines only because you were taught to believe them as a child, that then your belief in them is merely the accident of your having been born of Roman Catholic parents, and of your having been taught by them; and who can say but that if the accident had only been such that you had had Mahometan parents instead, you would not now at this very moment be persuading me, with exactly the same fervour, to accept the Koran, and to profess Mahomet to be the only true prophet?

Philip. I was about proceeding to explain to you, Thomas, the essential difference there is between the Roman Catholic religion and all the other religions of the world, when you burst in upon me with your vehement remonstrance. Pray, therefore, since you

plainly show that you have so very vivid a perception of the difficulty, listen with all the more attention to the explanation by which I intend to remove it.

The original order of the Divine creation as regards the teaching of religion, Thomas, was, that the child should learn its religion from its parents, and from those other instructors to whom the parents might further confide the care of the child ; a truth that is apparent in the Scripture, which says, " What " great things He commanded our fathers, that they " should make them known to their sons, that another " generation should know them ; and that the chil- " dren who should be born, when they grew up, " should likewise tell them to their children" (Ps. lxxvii. 6). That the Roman Catholic religion, then, acts in this same manner, Thomas, only proves that in common with all the other religions of the world, it obeys the order of God's creation, as originally given by God to men. But were the Roman Catholic religion to be known for nothing more than this, it would then only at the very best be able but just to hold its own ; or rather, to speak more accurately, it would never have acquired any thing at all of its own to hold. For the Roman Catholic religion is but the same apostolic religion which was first preached by the company of the Apostles, and which in process of time has come to acquire the name of ' Roman' from the government and authority of St. Peter, the prince of Apostles, having been permanently fixed in the city of Rome ; and the name of ' Catholic' from the religion having spread from Rome, as its centre, into all the world. Because it has the distinction of being apostolic, it is not in the least degree the less obliged, on this

account, to see that all parents diligently bring up their children in its creed and observances, exactly the same as all the other religions do. But what is exclusively proper to it as an apostolic religion is, that it is charged with the mission to invite the people of all the other religions of the whole world to desert them, and to come over to itself.

Thomas. I have certainly been in the habit, Philip, of hearing often enough the words of the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church;" but the idea, I must confess, comes before me now for the first time that the name *Apostolic* is to be held to imply any such thing as a mission to disturb other people in the peaceable enjoyment of their religions.

Philip. Your remark, Thomas, rather anticipates the course of our argument; for I shall presently have to show you that the reason of men, as long as the world shall last, will never be able to find rest for itself in any other creed than that of the one apostolic religion, which has received this mission to supplant all the other religions of the whole world.

In the mean time, however, all men will easily perceive that such a mission could only be authorised by a power that is able in its own right to supersede every other power and authority that has ever assumed the jurisdiction of life and death over men. It involves nothing less, Thomas, than the turning the whole world upside down, and introducing an entirely new order of things into it; and to give a mission of this kind, no authority was competent until the fulness of time came, when the Second Divine Person of the ever-blessed Trinity took our human nature, and died on the cross, outside the walls of Jerusalem, and, rising

from the dead on the third day, gave the requisite powers to His own followers, and sent them to their work to plant this same apostolic religion over the entire world. So you may perceive, Thomas, that if I owe my belief, in the first instance, in these doctrines to the care and solicitude of my parents, who caused me to be instructed in them when I was a little child, this is in perfect accordance with the order of God's creation, to which the apostolic religion conforms, as well as all others; but if you ask me, now that I am grown to the use of my understanding as a man, how I come still to hold to these doctrines, the authority of my father and mother, which sufficed for me as a very young child, has certainly now to disappear, as plainly insufficient, and the doctrines which at first I believed as a little child on their word, I must now believe on the word of another and greater authority, that of the Apostle St. Peter, the first Vicar of Jesus Christ, as represented by his living successor in the person of the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, my spiritual father, the present reigning supreme head and teacher of this apostolic religion.

Thomas. What you say, Philip, is at least perfectly clear as regards yourself; and I suppose you will be able to show me that the authority of St. Peter is a rational ground of belief for other people as well as for yourself. But as we are on the subject, I should like to ask you the question, if it is not too great a digression, what was it that made so serious a measure necessary as the sending an apostolic religion into the world, to disturb and turn upside down every thing which the different nations had hitherto enjoyed in peace?

Philip. Your question, Thomas, is by no means a digression, but one that intimately concerns our subject; nevertheless, I am afraid we must resign ourselves to pass it by, from the sheer impossibility of our pursuing the historical investigations by which alone it could be properly answered. We should have, for example, to trace out the rise and growth of the idolatrous rites and sacrifices among the various people descended from Noah, and to inquire by what steps the doctrines of Noah's original revelation (for, Thomas, Noah was a prophet of God) gradually became obscured among them, and what share the devils had in aggravating the deceptions. Then we should have further to inquire what glimmerings of the original doctrines were preserved in the various rites and practices of the different nations, and in what proportions truth is found mixed with falsehood in the classical works of history, poetry, and philosophy which have come down to us in the Greek and Latin languages. Full of interest as such a study of the history of the past would be, Thomas, it is plainly beyond our reach at the present moment. However, I believe we shall be safe in saying that, notwithstanding the mission of the apostolic religion entirely to renew the face of human society, it has always made a point of preserving every thing belonging to the former state of the world that could be preserved, and that it has destroyed nothing except that which it found so corrupted and perverted as to be entirely past all possibility of correction.

Thomas. I defer to your better judgment, Philip; though I quite feel how interesting the different investigations you mention might prove. Let me,

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however, ask you the question, how this apostolic religion was received ; for sent, as it appears to have been, in virtue of a power for the first time in the world's history claiming to be sovereign over the powers that held the jurisdiction of life and death, it seems to me capable of being very roughly handled ?

Philip. You have formed a perfectly right estimate of its reception, Thomas. All its Apostles but one died by the hands of the public executioner ; and the ordinary fate of those who succeeded to their ministry varied between imprisonment, banishment, torture, and a bloody death ; the multitude itself who believed being also continually liable to be called upon to share the sufferings of their clergy.

Thomas. Then, Philip, if this was the case, how came it not to be put down and suppressed ?

Philip. It is, I think, Job who says, " Who can say to God, What doest Thou ? " (Job ix. 12.) If the apostolic religion had been sent out into the nations of the world by any power short of God Himself, it would no doubt have been suppressed ; but Jesus Christ has promised to be with His servants all days, to the end of the world. It is consequently not in the power of the enemies of the apostolic religion to contend victoriously with the miraculous and supernatural power that always supports and sustains it, however cruel and persecuting they may be.

Thomas. Then am I to understand, Philip, that this apostolic religion is always sustained by the miraculous power of Jesus Christ ? For if you say this, and also say that the apostolic religion is only the same thing as the present Roman Catholic religion, which has merely come to acquire the new names of

"Roman" and "Catholic" without in any way altering its nature, I shall then have to understand that the Roman Catholic religion is continually, even at the present moment, kept up by miracles.

Philip. My dear Thomas, you are quite right; the Roman Catholic religion is kept up at the present day by exactly the same miracles as in the days of the Apostles; and these miracles will never cease till the end of the world comes. Only you must not run away with a false idea of the part assigned to miracles in the work of keeping it up. Every thing that belongs to the power of Jesus Christ as God, in the way of working direct miracles in contravention of the order of nature, which as God He has established, is transferred, as long as the world lasts, to the servants whom He employs in the work of the apostolic religion. But a rule of discretionary wisdom regulates His dispensation of this power in their hands, and needless profusion of the display of miraculous power is no part of this rule of wisdom. Thus when Herod, out of mere curiosity, desired to see a miracle worked by our Lord, he was not gratified (Luke xxiii. 8); and Jesus did not call for the twelve legions of angels to destroy Pontius Pilate's court, which He might have summoned. St. Paul also says that the miracle of tongues is a sign for the unbelievers only; while the sign for the believers is the interpretation of the Scriptures (2 Cor. xiv. 22). Thus you see, Thomas, that this rule, as regards the sparing use of supernatural and miraculous power, is in perfect conformity with a well-known maxim of natural right reason:

"Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus."

Ars Poetica.

Thomas. I like what you say very much, Philip. Pray proceed with your subject.

Philip. What I am going to say to you now, Thomas, may possibly be somewhat of a digression; but the reason of men is apt to be so very commonly and so deeply offended at what they consider their liberty and freedom of judgment being overridden by the display of miraculous power, that I wish to show you what has long struck me as a beautiful example, how tenderly and considerately Jesus Christ has acted, in always first trying to gain men strictly according to the order of things natural; mercifully hiding the miraculous and supernatural from them, that they might not be dazzled with too much light.

Thomas. We are masters of our own time, Philip; so you need not scruple about the digression, if indeed it be one.

Philip. As a reader of the Scripture, then, you have noticed, Thomas, that God chose His first people, the Hebrews, from the occupation of shepherds; and besides the fact that the three patriarchs of this people—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were shepherds, God also chose for them their great deliverer and legislator, Moses, from following the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro; and David, in the same way, the ancestor of their line of kings, God also took from following his father's flocks on the mountains of Bethlehem. Here, then, was a people of shepherds raised out of a most degrading state of civil bondage and servitude to the dignity of possessing their own laws and priesthood, and their delivery was effected by the hands of a legislator who had served the novitiate of

his office in the occupations of a shepherd on the mountains. This same people of shepherds were also schooled into assuming their place as a kingdom among nations by a king who served the novitiate of his kingly office in the same occupations of a mountain-shepherd. Now, Thomas, who can fail to be struck with the great suitableness of the school of the mountain-shepherd's experience for both Moses and David, and how eminently the reminiscences of their mountain-life were calculated to assist them in their subsequent duties? In eastern countries, shepherds on the mountains have to keep their sheep about them, individually attached to them; they have to know them severally by their faces, to study their habits, and to forecast what will prove dangerous to them, and what advantageous. And it was thus, in this sort of school, that both Moses and David learned to fit themselves for becoming rulers and leaders of men.

Thomas. What you say, Philip, appears to me perfectly just, though the idea has never occurred to me before:

Philip. But you must now, Thomas, take notice of and study another beautiful application of exactly the same principle to the new work of the apostolic religion. The apostolic religion starts with having no existing people whatever to work upon. The Hebrews, who ought to have been its people, reject it, and crucify its Divine Founder. Before, therefore, it can do any thing at all, or so much as show what it is, it must procure followers. The case with it literally is, that every one, who is afterwards to be benefited by it, has first to be caught for it; and in view of this necessity, let us now notice the Christ go to make choice of His

principal servants from a totally new order of natural occupations. He now addresses Himself to the class of fishermen, and takes St. Peter and several others from their nets (Matt. iii. 8). Here, then, is a totally new school of natural occupations introduced, and for the first time; not, of course, without a fitting reason, which it is not difficult to see. For what is the one ruling idea of the whole life of a fisherman except simply to catch fish? Not to catch fish, is to him sheer ruin and starvation. So that it is not merely that there is in a fisherman's mind the natural eager desire to catch fish; such a desire there is: but there is much more; there is the sense of the imperative necessity that he must either catch fish (which are not things that catch themselves), or that he must starve. It is, then, on precisely the same idea, only in another and a higher order of things, that our Lord has built the apostolic ministry of His religion. They, too, must be continually catching new fishes by their own skill and industry; or else even the world itself will mock, and say, "Look at those lazy fishermen, that are either too idle or too stupid to catch their fish." Thus, you see, Thomas, the Roman Catholic religion is by its very profession before the world a fisher of men; and in whatever particular country it fails to evince the spirit of the fisherman,—continually watching to catch fresh fish,—it is a sign that the salt of the earth is there showing symptoms of its being about to lose its saltiness, and to become fit only to be trodden under foot of men (Matt. v. 13).

Thomas. What you say, Philip, I assure you is to me in the highest degree satisfactory. The apostolic religion, I plainly see, can do nothing until it has

first caught its fishes ; and therefore the first thing of all that it has got to do is to catch its fishes. And I admit also, Philip, that in what you have said, you have shown me a beautiful instance of the tender consideration that is evinced on the part of God for the nature of men, in not over-riding them with the needless display of miraculous power. Nevertheless, Philip, because I can see that it is all-important to the new religion, which is to supplant every other, that it should catch its fish, this does not by any means explain to me how the fishes are to let themselves be caught, if they find the doctrines, which they are required to believe, to be such that their natural reason is justly offended at them, and that they cannot in consequence bring themselves to believe them.

Philip. Your difficulty, Thomas, is one that is common to a wonderfully great multitude of persons who either all have, or, what comes to the same thing, fancy that they have, some fault or other to find on the score of their reason with the doctrines that the new religion has introduced into the world ; and I should have a great objection to go at all out of my way to keep out of your sight the fact of this interminable controversy of men about these doctrines, on the ground of their reason. But still, Thomas, cast your eyes for a little while into the wide world outside yourself, and see on the other side the immense multitude of people of all nations, who are perfectly happy in the tranquil belief of these same doctrines, and who know nothing whatever of the difficulties which seem to you so formidable. All this vast multitude is able to take every thing on the sole word of St. Peter, the chief fisher of men, as

guaranteed to them by the testimony of his acknowledged successor, the reigning Roman Pontiff; who, it should be observed, Thomas, can never stand alone, and who is never otherwise than surrounded with an immense number of the most learned prelates and doctors who are in communion with him.

Thomas. I admit some considerable force in what you say, Philip; but still I can much more easily see that there is in the phenomenon to which you draw my attention a very short and compact way to an easy belief in these doctrines for simple people, rather than the way which an enlightened reason would point out as suitable for those who are not so simple. It seems to me, moreover, Philip, much more like the helplessness of a sick man, who is ready to open his mouth and to swallow implicitly any thing that his doctor chooses to give him, rather than the homage which an enlightened reason pays to truth.

Philip. If you will only calmly consider, Thomas, that the true religion could never have been otherwise than intended to benefit the immense numbers of men over the globe, who, in consequence of the effects of the sin of Adam, have fallen in different parts of the world into the most helpless state of barbarism and ignorance, that totally debars them from all possibility of that which you might call the way of enlightened reason to belief in these doctrines, you would then joyfully confess, Thomas, that nothing could be wiser and more merciful on the part of God, as regards all this immense mass of ignorant and savage people, than to offer them the simplest and easiest possible way to belief in the doctrines of the new religion. In this respect, then, what can be sim-

pler than to say to them, Take these doctrines on the authority of St. Peter's successor, who now sits and speaks in St. Peter's chair in the city of Rome? Now you find fault with this, Thomas, as being a sign and a mark of helplessness; yet what can be in fact a more real mark of Divine truth than to have provided for all such helpless multitudes a ground for believing which is not too difficult for their poor infirm faculties? Thomas, is not our Lord called the Physician of men? and with the act of the Physician tendering to the patient the medicine which the sick man is required implicitly to take, asking no questions, in spite of your objection, the Scripture fully agrees, which says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Ps. lxxx. 11). How, for example, Thomas, could a pah of New Zealanders possibly raise the various questions which even you and I have been discussing? and yet surely Jesus Christ died for them as much as for us, notwithstanding that their native powers of reason are in a condition which totally incapacitates them from raising your difficulties and objections.

Thomas. Well, Philip, I do not quite know, from what you say, whether I have not rather to lament a disadvantage in not having had the happiness to be a New Zealander; but be this as it may, I am not a New Zealander, and I do not think that I could be brought to believe by the same short and easy way which you commend as being suited to the nature and condition of the New Zealanders.

Philip. Well, Thomas, you see there is the example to meet your case of St. Paul condescending to dispute with the Greeks of Ephesus on their own

ground and in one of their own schools; so you may perceive that this short and easy way, of which you complain, is not by any means imposed upon you, if you prefer to try the longer and more difficult one of raising many difficulties and objections.

Thomas. You are a little hard upon me, Philip; for I cannot, as you know, help not being a New Zealander; and it really seems to me nothing but what is right and proper, that, when men have grown up to the use of reason without being directly indebted in any way to the doctrines that are proposed to them to be believed, their reason should be treated in consequence in a very different manner from that which would be thought suitable to the reason of a pah of New Zealanders.

Philip. Thomas, in this sentiment of yours I most heartily and entirely concur. Indeed, it is only necessary to remember that the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity did not think it beneath His own majesty as God to associate the right reason that is proper to a human nature in a hypostatic union with His Godhead, in order to see at once what a profound respect the right reason of men must henceforward always justly claim, and how serious a matter it must be at all times to fall into any notable departure from right reason, even in the order of things natural. But then, Thomas, whilst we concede to the human reason its true dignity, we must take care, at the same time, that we also duly acknowledge our own true condition as persons requiring to be taught. As the Scriptures say, "Blessed is the man, O Lord, whom Thou shalt instruct" (Ps. xciii. 12).

Thomas. This is a point, Philip, in which I am

greatly interested ; for I have often wished to know what satisfaction the Church of Rome is really ready to grant to the reason of men to induce them to consent to believe her doctrines. Will you undertake, for instance, to prove to the satisfaction of my reason that all the doctrines of the Church of Rome are such as a reasonable man can believe consistently with his reason, and without trampling upon what is its due ?

Philip. I do not think, Thomas, you can at all have duly reflected on what it is you have now been asking. Suppose, for the moment, that I consent to accept your challenge, Thomas, and then carefully consider how the case would stand. I should in consequence either have to argue before your reason, as being itself an infallible judge, or as being only a fallible judge, of what I might say. If your reason is in itself and by itself infallible, Thomas, what then can you possibly want with my argument ? for, whatever my argument might do besides, it would still have to persuade you to associate yourself to another infallible judge, the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, with whom, as being yourself also infallible, you would scarcely agree ; but, on the other hand, if you admit your own reason to be fallible, then you are requiring too much in claiming to sit as sovereign judge over the motives which the Church of Rome offers you to put faith in her doctrines, when you ought to be satisfied to be an intelligent listener.

Thomas. Philip, you strike somewhat with the force of a sledge-hammer ; but I am nevertheless obliged to acknowledge the justice of what you say. If I am infallible, you have certainly a right to tell me that I have reached the summit to which I can

attain, and that I can consequently want nothing more ; and if I am only fallible, then it appears that you may justly admonish me that I ought to be willing to allow myself to be led. Let me grant this to you, Philip. But to be led, raises the question, To be led by whom ? and no man of sense will trust himself to a guide without some very clear and reliable clue to the character of the guide, both as regards knowledge and fidelity ; and imperfect as a man's own efforts to find his way may at times be, nevertheless there may be many occasions, Philip, when by far his wisest plan will be to trust entirely to himself.

Philip. Can you seriously think, Thomas, if God who died on the cross has sent out His apostolic religion, of which we have been speaking, into the nations, endowed with the mission and the power to catch all that it could catch,—that He would have left His work so plainly incomplete as not to have appointed some one to take the office of guide for all His people ? Consider, Thomas, that in this manner He would have provided all men with a guide of His own choice, saying to them, This is the guide of My choice ; trust yourselves to his guidance ; I guarantee him to you to be one who can neither be deceived himself, nor deceive any one of those who trusts himself to his guidance ;—and, further, consider that, the moment men come to know of a guide of this kind, their minds will immediately become tranquil, and they will feel themselves to be in the hands of their future Judge, who will never be likely to condemn them for trusting themselves to one whom they have trusted for the sole reason that they were taught to regard him as the accredited Vicar of their Judge.

Thomas. What you say, Philip, has a great many points of deep attraction for my mind ; for I cheerfully own that it appears to me eminently agreeable to the mercy and goodness of God that He should have done all you suggest. Only I should certainly like to be adequately satisfied as to the person of the guide thus appointed ; and also to know something more about his credentials, which I presume would be extremely striking and unmistakable.

Philip. There is, Thomas, only one person in the wide world who claims, and who always has claimed, to be this guide for the whole world ; and of course, it would be singularly absurd to suppose, that the God who became Man should appoint a deputy to be the guide for His people for any thing less than for the whole world. This person, as we have already seen in our conversation in Richmond Park, is no one else than the Roman Pontiff. But, Thomas, as the evening is already advanced, and as we have discoursed of serious and fatiguing subjects for a long time, I propose to you to defer to another day our examination into the credentials which the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome has to exhibit, to prove him to be the guide whom Jesus Christ has appointed ; and if it is agreeable to you, let me expect you to-morrow evening at my house, to continue our investigation, while the subject is fresh in our minds.

Thomas. I most cheerfully accept your invitation, Philip ; as I confess that you have awakened in my mind a deep interest in the subject of my inquiry, by all you have said, far beyond what I could have supposed possible.

DIALOGUE SIXTH.

THE CHURCH OF ROME THE ONLY SAFE VENTURE FOR SALVATION.

SCENE: *A sitting-room in MR. PHILIP FAITHFUL'S house.*

PHILIP *explains the reasons of his finding so great a peace and tranquillity of mind to result from his trusting himself to the guidance of the Roman Pontiff; and he shows THOMAS that every man, in so important a question as that of eternity, has a perfect right, out of regard for his own salvation, to withdraw himself from every other guidance in order to place himself under the guidance which right reason points out to him to be the one only safe and good guidance.*

Philip. In honour of the visit, Thomas, which you pay me this evening, allow me this time to take the initiative in setting before you, in my own way, a preliminary general outline of the subject we are going to examine together. I have undertaken to give you, Thomas, the best account I am able of the perfect peace and satisfaction of mind that I continually experience in trusting myself to the guidance of the Roman Pontiff; and of course you will naturally expect me to wind up by doing my best to persuade you to accept the same guidance for yourself. Yet when I shall really come to do this, I fear it will be likely, in spite of your being prepared to expect it, to strike you, Thomas, as something in itself a little more positive and trenchant than you have been accustomed to; and, considering the great numbers of persons who are entirely estranged from the Pope,—

many of whom, by their excessive hatred and hostility, unconsciously verify our Lord's prediction: "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household?" (Matt. x. 25)—perhaps you may even think that it is impossible my persuasions should take any effect. Still antipathies of this kind, Thomas, deplorable as they unquestionably may be, are nevertheless things quite outside the control of right reason; but, as you know, in your case I indulge the hope that right reason will exercise a sovereign control over your future determination; and thus I have never thought the pains I have bestowed upon you would be thrown away, at least not to the same extent that they most probably might have been on not a few of your acquaintances.

Thomas. I only hope, Philip, that the event may prove me deserving of the good opinion you have formed of me.

Philip. I hope so also, and most confidently think that it will. But to proceed. In the first place, I think you will have no difficulty in admitting that right reason must always repudiate any theory that all men can be infallible in their present actual condition. For, were it true that men in their present condition are infallible, their common infallibility ought to be visibly attended with the consequence, that they should be seen, if not in a perfect, at least in a very general state of actual agreement with one another. But experience proves exactly the contrary; and it shows that the more men claim to be infallible, so much the less they are always found to be able to agree one with another. And, again, in whatever degree even any particular person ventures to set himself up as

infallible, it is invariably found that the social circle in which he moves is always, in the same proportion, unable to endure his presence, and in the same proportion glad to be able to keep out of his way. For the society of men is built on the humane principle of giving and taking, so happily expressed by the Roman poet :

“et mihi dulces
Ignoscent si quid peccavero stultus amici,
Inque vicem illorum patiar delicta libenter.”

Sat. i. 3. 140.

Thomas. You have reason on your side, Philip; and I think there cannot be a doubt that whoever refuses to submit to this condition of human society shows himself to be as unfit for it as he will certainly be shunned and avoided by it.

Philip. It is likely that you will also have observed, Thomas, how the same general experience of life shows, —partly in consequence of the uneven measure of the gifts of the understanding which men bring with them into the world, and partly from the original order and system which God has given to the societies of men, according to which the useful arts and sciences naturally distribute themselves into various avocations and professions,—that human society comes to exist and to be built upon the condition of men acting in the capacity of guides to their fellow-men, in an infinite variety of ways ; so that the human being who is absolutely proof against receiving any guidance from others is probably a phenomenon that has never been seen. Without, therefore, attempting to spin out an argument, there is, as we may see, quite enough evidence here to prove that it is strictly according to

right reason that we should take up with the guidance received from our fellow-men in the affairs of life, and that human society, in short, is built on the principle of men serving as guides to their fellow-men in all their chief concerns; the business and interests of religion in this respect forming no exception to the general rule, but, if any thing, being a higher exemplification of it rather than otherwise.

Thomas. I have no objection, Philip, to bring against any thing you say.

Philip. Then I must ask you, Thomas, to make me an important admission, which, were we legal adversaries arguing against each other on opposite sides, you would most probably refuse as a matter of course; but which, as a person who is only anxious to find the truth, and embrace it when found, you may grant me without the least hesitation, when you see, as you will do at once, how agreeable it is to right reason. I ask you, then,—considering the maze and confusion of conflicting doctrines, into which experience shows that those who profess to accept the Christian revelation are perfectly liable to fall, on the ground of that which they call their common Christianity,—to concede to me that Jesus Christ, whom St. Peter calls the Overseer and Shepherd of the souls of men, should have foreseen the possibility of this unhappy condition of disagreement, and should have provided a remedy for all who would not disdain His remedy.

Thomas. Explain your meaning, Philip; a little more at length. You see I raise no captious objection.

Philip. We shall be able to spare ourselves going

over the same ground twice if you will recall to mind the substance of our conversation in Richmond Park ; for the same line of argument will apply equally to the person of the deputy, whether acting as guide or acting as supreme judge, which was the point in particular we had at that time under consideration. If, then, we acknowledge in Jesus Christ a Person who is both God and true Man, the infallible guide of men in religion, making Himself visible and audible among men, and in whom it is a blessed thing not to be scandalised, what good man, Thomas, could object to the same guidance, with all the rich blessings flowing from it, being found perpetuated in the person of a deputy, if there were reasons why Jesus Christ Himself could not continue His own visible presence ?

Thomas. If there are reasons, Philip, as you seem to intimate, why Jesus Christ should not continue His own visible presence upon earth, why ought there to be so great a difficulty in admitting the doctrine of His being represented by a deputy ?

Philip. Consider, rather, what very great blessings may be derived to the Christian people through the channel of such a deputy ; and, on the other hand, see what numerous evils must follow from his absence ; indeed, behold the inextricable chaos of ruin and confusion that must result ! Men that are confessedly not infallible, and whose whole social life is built on the principle of trusting to each other's guidance, not only will, but must, be guided in religion. But, then, guided by whom ? By every species of clumsy, superficial, deceitful, and noxious pretender who will have the conceit and boldness to make his voice heard until he becomes the setting star, and

some other equally noxious pretender becomes the rising star. Can a really right-minded man, Thomas, endure seriously to think that the wisdom and goodness of Jesus Christ should have left the doctrines which He sealed with His blood on the cross to the mercy of the endless disputes of fallible men, and that He should not have appointed a chief steward over His work, to uphold peace and good order during His temporary absence?

Thomas. I must own, Philip, as I said to you at the end of our long conversation under the oak-tree, that I then acquired a very great respect for your doctrine of a Pope; but for all the truth there undoubtedly appears to me to be in what you say, I must, notwithstanding, confess that I am staggered at seeing such a terrible and amazing power lodged in the hands of one man, who, upon your theory, Philip, would have given to him alone to lead the whole world; and if he were so minded, to lead it astray, and so to make confusion worse confounded than ever.

Philip. Your difficulty, Thomas, is one that in my opinion merits the very greatest respect, and is by no means to be dealt with in any off-hand or summary manner. Consider, then, as follows, that no man can be asked to trust himself to the guidance of the Pope who has not previously determined to trust himself to Jesus Christ. The sole motive for now trusting the Pope arises out of our previous acceptance of the Christian revelation; and it is the fear and dread in which we are of being deceived in the things pertaining to this revelation that drive us in search of a reliable guide; and this search for a guide, as I understand, brings us to the Pope. Having therefore al-

ready known what it is to trust the person of the Christ Himself, the subsequent act of committing ourselves to the guidance of His Deputy or Vicegerent appears to me only a most easy, natural, and rational sequel or complement, so to speak, of our previous act in first trusting ourselves to the person of the Christ Himself.

Thomas. Then, Philip, your argument goes to show that the Deputy or Vicegerent of the Christ is purely a necessity arising out of the temporary absence of the person of the Christ from the order of things visible.

Philip. Since we do not possess the presence of Christ Himself otherwise than under the veil of a Sacrament, it is surely agreeable to Christian reason, Thomas, to say that the next best thing to Christ's own visible presence is to have the presence of Christ's direct Deputy or Vicegerent. The Christ Himself thus becomes the Guarantor of His Deputy; and the presence of the Deputy thus guaranteed must plainly be the next best thing to a believer in His revelation after the glorified personal presence of Christ Himself. But in a world full of wicked and obstinate men, such as our world is, Thomas, the glorified presence of Christ Himself would but provoke innumerable open blasphemies, which would render terrible punishments necessary; and if it has in consequence been withdrawn, it has been withdrawn purely in mercy; and what could Christ, then, under these circumstances, do more for His people than to place among them His Vicegerent, and guarantee to them the fidelity of the Vicegerent's guidance? Once more, Thomas, consider what must inevitably follow unless Jesus Christ does place His Vicegerent amongst His people. They are then left to the mercy of chance, either to tear themselves to

pieces in endless disputes about His doctrines, or to become a prey to every sort of audacious pretender and charlatan who may choose to set themselves up to be their guides, and whom, induced by the sense of their own infirmity, His people will in consequence most assuredly follow.

Thomas. I entirely admit a certain degree of truth in what you say. You now propose to me that I should accept the person of the visible Deputy on the faith of the invisible warranty which the invisible Christ is to give. But do you not see that we are by this means referred, as it appears to me, entirely to the invisible world for our ground of believing and committing ourselves to the guidance of a power about the character of which the present world is very much divided? This seems to me, I confess, a very hard thing, Philip, that you require.

Philip. I entirely grant, Thomas, that this is precisely the very point where the question of belief becomes a very great difficulty indeed to doubting and cavilling spirits,—when simple and confiding natures, like those of little children, find no difficulty in it at all. However, let us see if something cannot be found that will reasonably tend very much to smooth the way to belief, even with the most cavilling and the least confiding spirits. The great stress, so to speak, of this difficulty is, that so very much is seen to be embarked, as you would say, upon one apparently frail piece of humanity, without any sufficient visible check or guarantee. But to smooth the way to belief, let it be taken into account that, great as is the trust thus placed in one person, this nevertheless does not in any way contradict what we know from universal

experience to be part of the very nature or essence of all human society. In the world before Jesus Christ, the destinies of the human race were, for some two thousand years, embarked in a single empire, which passed successively from the Assyrians to the Chaldeans, the Persians, the Greeks, and finally the Romans; and during the whole of this protracted period, mankind saw every thing in the hands of a long succession of individual absolute monarchs, of whose sway and jurisdiction the prophet Daniel has given us a perfect description in the person of Nabuchodonosor, who was one of them. "O king," says Daniel to Baltasar, "the most high God gave the kingdom and its magnificence, glory, and honour, to thy father Nabuchodonosor. And by reason of the power which He gave to him, all people, tribes, and languages, trembled before him and feared him. Whom he would, he slew; whom he would, he smote; whom he would, he set up; and whom he would, he put down" (Dan. v. 18). And now that the world is broken up in the political order into a number of separate states, claiming their respective independent sovereignties, executive power is still seen invariably to evince the same law of its operation, viz. that in each state it finds its way into the hands of a single man. Take the case of the United States of North America, where you might least of all expect to discover this law in operation; and even there it appears in full vigour. The question of Negro emancipation has long been the bone of contention among the States composing that Confederacy; and when at length the arguments and discussion of the many give place to decisive action, the decision proceeds

from one person, and receives at his sole hands such execution as circumstances may permit. In the single edict of the President Lincoln, proclaiming the Negroes of the Southern States emancipated, we see exactly the same principle reappear which showed itself in Nabuchodonosor and in Augustus Cæsar, and which is really no other than the inherent necessity of all human society, to quarrel with which immemorial experience proves to be neither more nor less than to declare human society dissolved into its separate units.

Thomas. Well, Philip, what is our conclusion from all this to be?

Philip. Does not the conclusion appear to you plain and inevitable? Either you must declare that the whole order of human things is nothing else except an unintelligible chaos and jumble of conflicting agencies, from which no rational theory is capable of being educed; or you must admit, Thomas, that a Pope is as much a truth of right reason in religion, as an emperor is a truth of right reason in politics, the general of the army a truth of right reason in war, and the father of the family in domestic life.

Thomas. I believe I must acknowledge the truth of what you say, for I cannot dispute the universal experience by which it is borne out. The citizens of the Roman Republic held out as long as it was in human nature to hold out, in order to save themselves from this inherent tendency of all human society to a centre; but it proved too strong for them. Augustus Cæsar, I consider, Philip, incontestably proves the truth of what you have now said; and the lines of Horace, where he is greeting his imperial patron's

return, have often struck me very forcibly as expressing the real cause of the victory of the imperial idea :

“ *Hic dies vere mihi festus atras
Eximet curas, ego nec tumultum
Nec mori per vim metuam tenente
Cæsare terras.*”

III. *Od. xiv. 14.**

Peace and security for life and property, Philip, are more directly tangible good things in the eyes of all men than any theories of liberty ; and I suppose you would argue that peace and tranquillity of mind as regards the truth of the doctrines of the Christian revelation, and quiet and assured possession of all that Holy Mother Church, as you would say, provides for the needs of men in this life, flow from the universal acceptance of the Pope in religion, in the same manner in which the Roman citizens found public peace and security to flow from the imperial power of Augustus Cæsar.

Philip. You express my meaning perfectly, Thomas. And now let us turn our eyes to see a secret in the counsels of God, showing us how men have been unconsciously prepared to accept the person of the Vicegerent of Jesus Christ. We have seen how God intended the life of shepherds to be an appropriate schooling for both Moses and David, as also generally for the Hebrew people themselves. And we have seen with what wisdom God has also chosen the occupation

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- * “ For me this truly festal day
Shall drive each cloud of care away ;
Nor shall I draw in fear my breath
For civil broil or bloody death,
While Cæsar sway o'er earth shall bear.”
Martin's translation.

offishermen to serve as the model, in the natural order of things, for the vocation of an Apostle to the work of the apostolic religion. I wish you, then, now to consider, Thomas, how the long duration of an absolute imperial power over the nations of the world has equally served in the hands of God to school the minds of all men to accept the person and office of the Pope of the Christian religion. Nothing is more possible, no doubt, than to quarrel with the Pope ; but the consequences of the quarrelling are only directly to dissolve all human society into its units, and to drive men either to seek a temporary shelter in all sorts of self-made associations, in which doctrine, worship, and ritual become the merest shifting sand-bank ; or else to separate themselves, as I think you have told me has latterly been your practice, from any society at all, and to be satisfied to subside quietly into blank scepticism and indifference.

Thomas. I entirely admit the force of what you say, Philip, and I presume that this is, in brief, the substance of your case ; and that it is on the strength of this showing, Philip, that you urge upon me the propriety and wisdom of my submitting myself to the authority of the present Pope, Pius IX., the 258th in succession from St. Peter ; and of my making up my mind to enter the communion of the Church of Rome.

Philip. The particular number is not very material, Thomas ; but I must not let you run away with the notion that you have any thing like heard the whole case. What we have gone through has been merely a concise survey of the *a-priori* line of proof, namely, that the establishment of a Pope in the Christian religion is an indispensable necessity of the question

of having any stable social peace and order in religion ; and that being such an indispensable necessity, it is to be concluded, from the known mercy and wisdom of Jesus Christ, that He would not have left His people without giving them a Pope. After this line of proof comes the testimony of history to the line of the Popes. For the Popes, Thomas, have now been a visible fact before the eyes of the nations of the world for eighteen entire centuries ; a period of time which must, beyond all dispute, in the nature of things have something of note to say either for or against the working of the Papal power. In addition, therefore, to the line of argument *a priori*, it is not to be forgotten that there follows in natural order the argument *a posteriori* ; or, in other words, the testimony of the Christian nations to the Roman Pontiffs, as contained in the authentic annals and records of their history.

Thomas. Well but, Philip, on this issue, you, of course, know very well that there are two entirely antagonist sides ; and where there are so many who confidently assert that the history of the Christian nations contains the sentence of the condemnation of the Popes plainly written on every page, how can you show that you have any right to appeal to it as making in favour of the step to which you are urging me ?

Philip. Very easily, Thomas. The existence of the very discontent you refer to, in itself constitutes a direct argument to which I intend to appeal. In the first place, then, it proves nothing more against the Popes except that they have failed to satisfy large numbers of persons, and that they have fallen under the calumnies of others. Now, Thomas, observe that

the very same was exactly the lot of the Christ Himself, who has exhibited, in His own person, a perfect epitome of all that has since been objected to the whole line of the Popes. Jesus Christ was accused of being in league with Beelzebub (Matt. xii. 24), with deceiving the people (John vii. 12), with being an enemy to the Temple as a Samaritan, and with being possessed by a devil (John viii. 48) ; He was charged with being a turbulent man and a leader of sedition before Pontius Pilate, and with being an invader of the rights of Cæsar (Luke xxxii. 2). It was cast in the teeth of His followers that they were only the poor, and that none of the princes of the people acknowledged Him (John vii. 48) ; and those who had followed Him for a time afterwards gave the scandal of being seen to leave Him, and to walk no more with Him (John vi. 67). Yet, in spite of all these adverse influences, our Lord's cause grew even in His lifetime ; and at the time of His crucifixion, He passed for the Great Prophet of Galilee, and Greeks at the last Pasch desired to be introduced to Him. If therefore our Lord's words are to hold good, and if it is to suffice for the disciple that he be as his Lord, the phenomenon of antagonism and calumny against the line of the Popes proves more for them than it can prove against them. It proves indisputably the perfect parallel between themselves and Jesus Christ (1) in point of the hostility and obloquy which they have had continually to endure, and (2) the impotence of this hostility and obloquy to put them down, and to prevent the growth and extension of their cause. So much, Thomas, for the phenomenon of hatred and opposition, which you see yields a very different evidence, when it comes to be

examined, than what you would naturally suppose at first sight. But now for the reverse of the medal, Thomas. "*Molto odiata*," says Dante; but "*molto piu amata*." If the Popes have been the object of hatred, what are you to say, Thomas, of the undying affection that the nations of the world have borne, and still bear, to the throne of St. Peter, in spite of so many defections? I cannot quite bring myself to quote what have now become the extremely hackneyed words of Macaulay, describing the future New Zealander sketching the ruins of St. Paul's from a broken arch of London Bridge, at the same time that he finds the throne of St. Peter still erect in the city of Rome; let us rather apply to our case a dictum of Mr. Thomas Carlyle, "*that no sham can live*," and see what answer the eighteen centuries of the Papacy give when this key is applied to them. Call the whole line of Popes a standing imposture, if you will; but it is the solitary known instance in the world of a line of impostors, whom eighteen centuries have not worn out, and for which even an adversary himself foresees, for all he can tell, another eighteen centuries to come.

Thomas. I cannot choose but admit the force of all you say, Philip; but still I feel a very strong desire to have the infallibility of the Pope proved to me in some more direct manner.

Philip. Excuse me, Thomas, but you can hardly have considered what it is you are now asking? From the nature of the case you can never have more than an immense body of cumulative evidence, to establish that the choice of the Pope is the best possible choice of the best possible guide in a matter which admits

of no delay, and where, every day that you pass apart from your proper guide, Thomas, you are imperilling the final loss of treasures, for the recovery of which there is no second redemption. Let us call in the aid of a comparison : a detachment of soldiers in the enemy's country, Thomas, will deliberate among themselves somewhat in the following manner ; they will say : " For us to remain on the ground is certain death ; for by to-morrow the enemy will be down upon us in force. Respecting the way to our fortress of refuge, we are ourselves ignorant ; and as for guides, this guide says, Follow me ; and this other guide says, Follow me. The choice before us, then, is either to remain, and fall into our enemy's hands, which is to choose death ; or to make our choice between the guides who offer their services, and trust one of them, or else to guess our own way for ourselves." Would you say, Thomas, that the soldiers were acting according to right reason, if they were now to say to that particular one of the guides, for whose knowledge and fidelity there were incomparably superior indications than any of the others could show, " First prove to us that you are infallible, and then we will trust ourselves to your guidance" ? Would not the guide reply, " I do not force my services upon you ; it is you who fear death, not I ; it is you who require me, and not I you ; you need not engage me, but if you do engage me, you must trust me" ? Now the Pope, Thomas, does not act in any other manner than this ; what fault have you, then, to find with him ?

Thomas. Then, Philip, I understand you to say, that in the salvation of a man's soul, no man, for his own sake, ought to run any unnecessary risk ; for that if the

soul is lost through the ill-guidance of a bad guide, it is lost, and lost beyond remedy, there being no second redemption; and that, in consequence of the terrible value of what is at stake, no man should dare to trust to any inferior guide, but should at once fly to the guidance of the Pope, as the one sole Guide who gives better proofs of the fidelity of his guidance than any other guide who can be found.

Philip. You express my meaning perfectly, Thomas; this is what I say, and on this ground I most resolutely, and without the least hesitation, exhort and persuade you with all my might to desert every other guide, and to attach yourself solely and exclusively to the guidance of the Pope, by making profession, as speedily as possible, of the Christian faith, as a member of the Church of Rome.

Thomas. I see, Philip, it all comes back at the last issue to the grace of God, without which the clearest deductions of human reason will not make faith, or give a man the heart to pass the "Rubicon," and decide to enter the communion of the Church of Rome. You must pray for me, Philip, and obtain prayers to be offered for me; for I find I have lived and grown old in the company of those who are very little accustomed to treat the grace of God as having any thing to do with the question, what course we ought to make up our minds to take. All that you say to me, Philip, awakens more and more of the desire in my heart to be enrolled in the Pope's company, and to profess his religion before I die; and if my faith is at present much more infirm than it ought to be, and if I cannot quite say as yet, "I believe," I hope I still say from my heart, "Lord, help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark

ix. 24). However, Philip, we must meet again; and next Sunday evening, if you can, come to my house and sit with me, that we may continue our subject.

Philip. By all means, Thomas; and in the mean time I will try and pray for you still more in my poor way. Still, Thomas, do not depend upon my prayers in such a way as not to understand that a man usually prays far better and harder for himself than any body else, as a general rule, ever does for him.

DIALOGUE SEVENTH.

NO RELIABLE GUIDANCE IS TO BE EXPECTED, EITHER DIRECTLY FROM THE PERSON OF THE INVISIBLE CHRIST, OR AGAIN DIRECTLY FROM THE SACRED BOOK OF THE BIBLE, APART FROM A RELIABLE INTERPRETER.

SCENE: *Sunday evening; a sitting-room in MR. THOMAS GOODMAN'S house.*

PHILIP *answers* THOMAS'S *two chief difficulties*, (1) *with respect to the possibility of trusting to the direct guidance of the invisible Christ, and* (2) *with respect to the possibility of deriving safe guidance directly from the Bible.*

Thomas. I have been turning over in my mind, Philip, very carefully the subject of our last conversation, and I have not been able to find any really valid objection against the substance of what you have advanced. For it seems as if it ought to be plain enough to any ordinary understanding, that if we refuse to accept the guidance which is offered to us in the person of the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, we must either take up with some other guidance in the place of his, or we must say that we are sufficient for ourselves, without needing to be indebted for our guidance either to the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome or to any other living man. Nevertheless, turning over in my mind what you have said, I think, Philip, I can perceive in what way it may be quite comprehensible that there should be the great numbers you speak of,

who have chosen, and who still will choose, the guidance of the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, simply because it cuts short a great deal of questioning, and because his guidance is of a nature to save those who can believe it a great deal of trouble ; but by no means because there is any thing like the imperative necessity for adopting his guidance that you appear to intimate. Thus, for example, I have met in my time with persons who have acknowledged to me that they entertain a very great respect for the Pope, and that they perfectly understand that any attempt at episcopacy without a Pope must be a most contemptibly weak and hybrid kind of affair ; but that nevertheless, for their own part, they recognise none but the invisible Head of the Church, and that they are perfectly satisfied with His invisible guidance alone. Again, Philip, you are quite aware of the immense number of persons who hold the Pope in direct aversion and disesteem, and who say that God has given the volume of the sacred Scriptures to serve as the guide of men, and that the Bible by itself—the pure Word of God—is the best religion for all, being incapable of leading any man astray. Now, unless these two classes of persons—each numerous in their way, and the latter of the two exceedingly numerous, and even spread through a great many different countries—are to be held to be fundamentally mistaken, it will clearly follow, Philip, that while we may allow all who prefer the Pope's guidance, for reasons known to themselves, to enjoy it to their heart's content, and to follow it in peace, we are by no means necessarily confined to the Pope's guidance in the way you seem to intimate, but, free from all blame, may be satisfied with either

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the guidance of the invisible Head of the Church, or else with the sacred Scriptures as our guide. I therefore wish, Philip, to hear what you have to say on these two points. Can it be that you really intend to maintain that both these classes of persons are fundamentally mistaken, and that the Roman Pontiff is nevertheless still the one only guide who can be safely followed? for if you intend to maintain this, I should most certainly, Philip, like to hear the reasons with which you propose to support your case.

Philip. You have put your difficulty, Thomas, in a perfectly fair and clear manner; and I must of course say to you, in reply, that these two classes of persons whom you mention are both as totally and as fundamentally mistaken as they can possibly be. But then it would be to very little purpose merely to assert this to you, without proceeding to show you in what the nature of the mistake which they each severally make consists; and to arrive at this, we must take the two cases apart, and examine each separately by itself.

Those, then, who say, Thomas, that it is sufficient for them to follow the guidance of the invisible Christ, and that they wish to know nothing about the person of His visible Deputy, fall into many difficulties, of which not the least is, that an invisible Guide in a visible world is plainly a thing not according to right reason. The objection which Luther urged against the Pope was, that he furnished men with a guidance which possessed all the other established requisites of good guidance, except, as Luther said, the single one of truth: the guide was a visible guide, his words were audible words; if any one dis-

puted the authenticity of what was alleged to come from him, there he was in his city to answer any inquiry as to his words. But the single lack of truth in the guidance, according to Luther, only changed all these qualities in the guide into so many fresh evils ; yet still there they were, and there, in consequence, was a visible, an audible, and an intelligible guide ; and all that he wanted, even according to Luther, was the truth of his guidance. But when people say that they follow the person of the invisible Christ as their Guide, they seem to signify much more clearly that they have no mind to follow the guidance of the Deputy who is visible, than that they actually succeed in following the person of their Guide who is invisible. For this we can certainly only have their own word ; and if they really hold at their command the necessary means of communicating with their invisible Guide, these means can only be known to themselves ; and as this is a point where men are singularly exposed to the danger of innumerable illusions, their word cannot go for very much. Moreover, such a notion, as a matter of fact, does not really recommend itself except to a comparative minority ; and it may be more than suspected in their case, that the chief ground of their fancied attachment to their invisible Guide is not so much the actual guidance which they receive from Him, as the convenient plea which the claim to be possessed of invisible guidance affords for keeping aloof from the guidance of the visible Deputy, and for following their own fancies with a better grace. During our Lord's lifetime, it is on record that He twice made Himself suddenly invisible, once from the inhabitants of Nazareth, and

the second time from the Jews in the Temple ; and certainly, in neither of these cases, had His sudden invisibility any purpose in view to enable Him to act the part of a Guide in a better manner than when He remained visible. The invisible Guide, therefore, in the visible world may be thus plainly seen to be a wild assertion, exposed to infinite delusions, and which must be dismissed, as not having any claim upon reasonable men to be treated as a truth of right reason.

Thomas. I am not myself disposed, Philip, to raise any objection to what you say ; for, to confess the truth, the notion of an invisible Guide for the real practical business of the present world has always appeared to me to be nothing better than sheer nonsense, only proper for those who, for some reason or other, seek to deceive themselves. If I allow the question of religion to occupy a place in my mind, I do this from regarding it as a real business of the present visible world as well as of the future world, which we are not as yet able to see ; and to say that the one sole Guide, who is to serve all our needs in the present visible world, has left us, to go and hide Himself away from us in the invisible world, can never appear to me at all according to right reason. What, for instance, should we think of any friend who might seriously advise us to seek the direction of an invisible law-adviser in any pressing intricate question of legal business ? However, Philip, the volume of the sacred Scriptures does not lie under this imputation of being invisible ; but, particularly since the recent labours of the numerous Bible-societies of England and other countries, it has become visible

enough ; for it has now more or less inundated the whole world in a great variety of different languages. Here, then, is surely a guidance that is both visible and incapable of deceiving those who trust to it. What have you to say to this, Philip?

Philip. Before I answer your question, Thomas, let me ask, if it should turn out that I have something to say to this, would you be prepared to listen quietly to that something, and to bring all your own natural right reason to weigh and consider what I might have to say?

Thomas. Why should I not, Philip? Have I not already given you proof enough that I am a real plain inquirer, who wants to know the honest truth about the Roman Catholic religion, and to hear what account it has to give of itself as to the means by which it manages to lead so many different sorts of persons to follow it? Say all that you have to say, Philip, with perfect freedom and openness, and never doubt for a moment that I shall have the least objection to hear you.

Philip. Then, Thomas, the question at issue, I think, can very soon be made plain between us, on these conditions. Your proposition is, that the Bible answers fully to the requisites of a guide in religion, (1) by its being sufficiently visible, and (2) by its being incapable of deceiving those who trust to it. In laying our question down in this manner, we prescind very usefully a large number of other questions that would cause us much delay ; and we are enabled in this manner to come by a short and simple process to our issue. You admit then, Thomas, that the guide in religion for the present world must be a visible

guide ; and, agreeably with this admission, the first article in your plea is, that the Bible, as a guide, is now become sufficiently visible to serve its purposes. To this first article in your plea, Thomas, I have two things to reply. First, that granted, for argument's sake (what nevertheless is not by any means sufficiently proved), that the Bible, by the labours of the Bible-societies, has now come to be able to claim the requisite amount of visibility, and altogether pre-scinding the further question, as to what is a true and what is only a mutilated and badly translated Bible, nothing can be plainer, Thomas, to right reason than that this general visibility of the Bible is of extremely recent date. From which the consequence must follow, as regards the first article in your plea, that supposing the Bible to be the intended divine Guide in religion, it is only now, in the nineteenth century, that this divine Guide is gradually coming to acquire something like the amount of visibility which is nevertheless, from the nature of the case, the inseparable condition of its being of any real and practical use as a guide. Hence, then, on your own showing, Thomas, all the generations which preceded this entirely recent and modern phenomenon of the increasing visibility of the Bible must be said to have lived and perished destitute of their proper guidance. Now, do you not see, Thomas, that to say this is to bring a formal accusation of a most frightful kind against the mercy and providence of God, as regards all these generations that have been thus left to perish apart from any thing like the proper visibility of their guide ? But, secondly, Thomas, you must consider that right reason dictates to us, that,

though "visibility" in the Guide is indispensable, in order to enable us to find out where he is that we may be able to come to him, we want more than mere visibility in the person of our Guide, if we are really to profit by his guidance. We want to be able to hear him speak. The beginning of all religion is faith; and however strongly seeing may be of a nature occasionally to contribute to believing, and to dispose people to believe,—as the miracles worked by our Lord and His Apostles, and the continual appeal made to these miracles, plainly shows,—yet the seeing the miracles never served more than the intermediate purpose of bringing those who saw them to listen to the words of the preacher who preached the doctrine, according to St. Paul's plain rule, "Faith is from hearing, and hearing is from the Word of Christ" (Rom. x. 17). Faith, according to St. Paul, is the consenting to believe the words of an audible speaker, which audible speaker was first **THE Christ HIMSELF**, audible in His own visible **DIVINE** Person, and since the withdrawal of His visible person into the invisible world, Christ audible in the person of one visible Deputy, who up to the present hour has inundated the whole world with his missionaries (fortified and armed with a jurisdiction derived from the one chief centre), whose words and preaching in all parts of the world are continually both calling men to faith, and exhorting them to continue and persevere steadfast in the faith after they have embraced it. You see, Thomas, now very plainly, that as regards the first article of your plea, the visibility of your Guide, you have a clear twofold answer. The volume of the sacred Scriptures is only acquiring of quite recent date some-

thing like the requisite visibility; but nevertheless, even if it had always possessed this "visibility," no argument of any weight or importance would arise out of it; for the Guide in religion which men need, besides being one whom they can *see*, must be also one whom they can *hear*; otherwise their being merely able to see him will serve their purpose very little indeed.

Thomas. What you have now said, Philip, appears to me, as far as I can form an opinion about a line of argument which I listen to for the first time in my life, entirely according to right reason. We do not remember, Philip, in our long experience of business-life in the city of London, any single instance of a merchant buying a quantity of law-books, with the intention of conducting his own legal business; but every reasonable man trusts such business to his legal advisers; and when he has reason to think himself in unsafe hands, he makes a fresh choice, and transfers his business to a new firm of solicitors. However, it is so commonly said that the Word of God is an infallible guide, that to throw any kind of doubt upon it has the unpleasant appearance of being so like a direct act of impiety, that I wish to hear what you have to say to the second article of my plea, that the Bible is incapable of deceiving those who trust in it.

Philip. The fallacy here, Thomas, by which such numbers of men appear so deeply eager to deceive themselves, is nevertheless extremely easily detected, if there were not some extraordinary ruling desire which seems to impel men in crowds to embrace the deception. It lies in supposing that it ever can be

in the nature of the Bible to give any direct articulate answer. The supposed answer of the Bible is in no sense the real answer of the book itself, which has no power to articulate a direct answer; but only the answer which the particular person using the book chooses to extract out of it, who is both liable to be totally deceived as to the real meaning of the words, without any fraudulent intention, or who may with a direct fraudulent purpose make use with malice prepense of a consciously false interpretation of them, by which simple and ignorant people will be led astray. To illustrate my meaning by an example: the doctrine of the Godhead subsisting in Three Divine Persons, is either true or false; and the truth respecting this doctrine no one doubts to be contained in the Bible. But if the Bible were the Guide God had intended for men, it would plainly be the duty of the Guide to pronounce one way or the other, and not to leave men in doubt; for if the Guide could not do this, the common sense of all men who do not directly seek to deceive themselves must say, What is the use of a Guide that cannot say yes or no to a question? How, then, does the Bible answer? To the Trinitarian the Bible is supposed to answer, "The doctrine is true;" but to Dr. Priestley and the modern Unitarians the Bible is supposed to answer, "The doctrine is false." And the truth is, that the answer in either case is only supposed; for it is not the Bible that has answered the one more than the other, but it is they who have each answered themselves out of the Bible, in the manner that best accorded with the side they had already taken. When the Church of Rome however, Thomas, declares the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,

she says, In virtue of the gift of Infallibility residing in me, which proceeds from the same Spirit of Truth that speaks in the Scriptures, and as the accredited Witness of God, I teach this doctrine to be true, and to be contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Thomas. Then, Philip, you plainly and unhesitatingly assert, that God never could have intended the Bible to serve as the direct Guide of men in religion ?

Philip. Most certainly I assert this. "I am the Way," says our Lord ; "I am the Truth," and "I am the Life." The person of the Christ, Thomas, is not the Bible, nor the Bible the person of the Christ. Two things so distinct can only be confounded together by those who wish to be deceived. The Church of Rome says, that Jesus Christ now leads and guides men through the action of His visible Deputy, the Roman Pontiff, who is a Guide that leaves no man in doubt, for he can answer yes or no to any question that is put to him ; to do which, as we have just seen, is indispensable to a guide, but totally foreign to the nature of such a book as the Bible.

Thomas. But, Philip, it seems to me that it may be most seriously objected to your doctrine, that you greatly degrade the holy Scriptures in order to exalt the person of the Pope.

Philip. Aristotle says, in his Politics, "that whenever a sick person suspects that his physician has been persuaded by his enemies to be guilty of any foul practice to him in his profession, he then chooses rather to apply to books for his cure."* Yet in Aristotle's time, as he has himself confessed

* Bohn's translation, p. 121 (book iii. c. xvi.).

in the preceding sentence, "it was universally held "to be wrong for a sick person to apply for a remedy "to books, and that it would be far more eligible to "employ those who are skilful in physic." That the world has not departed from this rule, of refusing to have recourse to books in the place of men, after more than two thousand years, we have, among numberless others, Dr. Southey's testimony, who, in his book entitled *The Doctor*, says that the books which bear the title "Every Man his own Doctor" ought much rather to be called "Every Man his own Poisoner." There is really no war between books of medical science and the medical practitioners, except such as is stirred up by professed mischief-makers; and in like manner there is no real antagonism whatever between the Pope and the Bible. Indeed it is one important part of the benefit derived from the office of the Pope, that he keeps men from deceiving themselves by the wrong use of the Bible; just as it is one part of the benefit of the physician's profession to keep men from poisoning themselves by the wrong use of medical books.

Thomas. But, Philip, as a fact, nobody is ever really deceived by the Bible, out of the thousands and tens of thousands who daily read it.

Philip. Should you like me, Thomas, to give you an instance how possible it is for the Bible to be used for the deception of men? It shall be such an instance as you will scarcely dispute.

Thomas. By all means, Philip, give me your instance.

Philip. Do you remember, Thomas, who it was that took our Lord to the pinnacle of the Temple,

and then tried to persuade Him to cast Himself down.

Thomas. I remember quite well,—it was the devil.

Philip. What was the object which the devil had in his mind that made him try to persuade our Lord to cast Himself down?

Thomas. I cannot quite profess to say that I know exactly all that the devil would have had in his mind, Philip; but certainly nothing good,—that is beyond all doubt.

Philip. Then you admit, Thomas, that the devil intended in some way to bring the Christ to misfortune, by his suggestion that He should cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple. Let us now see how he may be best supposed to have sought to effect his wicked and sinister purpose. First of all, he would naturally try to lull all suspicion in the mind of his intended victim, and to make it appear that he was recommending nothing but what was an unexceptionably pious and religious thing to do; then he would press for the thing suggested to be done at once. Now, what is the book that furnishes the devil with the means of urging his crafty deception upon his intended victim? It is the Bible, Thomas; the divine Guide by which, on the showing of the second article in your plea, no man can be deceived. "Cast Thyself down," the devil urges upon the Christ,—“cast Thyself down;” for it is written in the Bible, “He hath given charge to His angels that they bear Thee up in their hands, lest at any time Thou hurt Thy foot against a stone” (Ps. xc. 11). It is not necessary to say that the devil did not succeed in deceiving the Christ through the Scriptures; but if it had not

been foreseen that the devil would try to deceive the Christians by means of the Scriptures, and that the Christians were in perpetual danger of the devil's succeeding in deceiving them by means of the Scriptures, the devil would never have been permitted to try to practise a deception of this same kind on the person of our Lord.

Thomas. What you say, Philip, seems absolutely undeniable. If it be true that the devil is continually busy deceiving men, it must plainly follow that his having made use of the Scriptures in his attempt to deceive the Christ, is only a sample of the mode in which he will constantly and incessantly keep trying to deceive men; and from this it must follow, that the Scriptures will plainly be able to become the devil's instrument in deceiving men, as well as they can be the instrument of the Apostles of Jesus Christ in teaching and instructing men. And therefore all comes back, Philip, to the question, as to the mode and way in which the sacred Scriptures are to be used, and who is to be the guide to their use and the interpreter of their meaning.

Philip. Certainly, Thomas; you are in this point perfectly right. St. Paul says, "All Scripture, being inspired of God, is useful for teaching, for refuting, for reproving, for instructing, and for justice" (2 Timothy iii. 16); while St. Peter, on the other hand, writes: "As our beloved brother Paul hath written to you, according to the wisdom that has been given to him, speaking in them as indeed in all his epistles, in which are many things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable pervert, as likewise they do the other

"Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Peter iii. 16).

Thomas. This certainly, Philip, clenches the whole question, and I admit ought to put an end to all doubt in the minds of reasonable men, that the Scriptures, which can be thus perverted by the unlearned and the unstable to their own destruction, can never have been given by a good and merciful God to men, to serve indiscriminately as their only guide in religion, apart from a living interpreter, who is to decide upon their meaning. You have fully satisfied me, Philip, that the reasons you have hitherto brought forward in behalf of the guidance of the Roman Pontiff are in no way impaired or weakened in their force by the difficulties which I have raised this evening. But before we quit the subject, there is one question on which I much wish to hear what you have to say. What is the reason of the great hostility which the Roman Catholic Church is universally understood to entertain to the work of the Bible-societies, and to the general free circulation of the Scriptures in the hands of the laity?

Philip. The question you here ask, Thomas, would lead us into a long investigation if you were resolved to require an elaborate answer; but I may reply to it briefly by saying, first, as regards the work of the Bible-societies, that the Church of Rome takes up the same objection to them that all legitimate governments have to falsifiers of their coinage. The Bible of the Bible-societies is a mutilated and falsely translated book, and prohibited on the ground of its bearing some portion of the relation to a true Bible that a spurious shilling bears to a silver shill-

ing. And, secondly, as regards the discipline of the Church towards her own Bible in this respect, her legislation has always had the actual state of the case in view, and has legislated and shaped its course with reference to the particular existing condition of society. In the days of the doctors of the Church, St. Augustine and St. Basil, the practice was rather to encourage than to repress the free circulation of the Scriptures; and it is equally plain from the letters that passed to and fro in the time of St. Thomas of Canterbury, that the Scriptures were household words then to all educated classes. If, however, at the time when the art of printing had been invented, and Luther and similar other enemies had begun to print mutilated and unauthorised versions in the vernacular languages, the discipline of the Church of Rome then changed,—in the direction of putting considerable restrictions on the circulation of the Scriptures in the hands of the laity,—the particular restrictions then imposed had respect to the peculiar dangers that had then to be guarded against. These restrictions, however, which were then in force, are now practically to a great extent fallen into desuetude, and the circulation of the Scriptures is now, in practice at least, subject to scarcely any hindrances. Nevertheless, the words of the Council of Trent will always remain in force, which run thus: “ Moreover, “ in order to restrain men of unruly minds, this holy “ Synod decrees, that no one relying on his own “ knowledge, and twisting the sacred Scripture after “ his own fashion in things pertaining to faith and “ morals, and to the building-up of Christian doctrine, shall presume to interpret the sacred Scrip-

“ tures against the sense which Holy Mother Church
“ hath always held and holds, seeing that it belongs
“ to her only to judge of their meaning and interpre-
“ tation ; neither, besides this, may he presume to
“ interpret them against the unanimous consent of
“ the Fathers” (Council of Trent, sess. iv.). Thus
you see, Thomas, the Roman Church undertakes to
guide her people to the true meaning of the sacred
Scriptures, deeming it to be the worst possible ne-
glect, on her part, to leave them to the danger of per-
verting these Scriptures to their own destruction.

Thomas. I perceive, Philip, that the system of the
Church of Rome is at least perfectly complete and
consistent with itself; and the more I begin to see
into its nature and constitution, from what you tell
me, the less I wonder at the firm and constant at-
tachment which I observe so many Catholics, your-
self among the number, bearing towards it. What
will you explain to me, Philip, at our next meeting ?

Philip. If you are not tired, Thomas, I propose
at our next meeting to speak to you on the subject
of the advantages to be gained by an association to
the perfect society of the Apostolic Company, which
knows no limit of nation or language, and where Jesus
Christ is present in the churches under the veil of
the Holy Eucharist.

Thomas. I shall be quite as ready to listen to you,
Philip, as you see I have been hitherto.

DIALOGUE EIGHTH.

THE PERFECT SOCIETY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

SCENE : *A summer afternoon in East Sheen ; PHILIP and THOMAS seated in the shade in MR. GOODMAN'S garden.*

PHILIP *explains to THOMAS that the nobility of man's nature prompts him to seek the most perfect form of society that he can find ; and he shows to him that no society is to be compared to the perfect society which Jesus Christ has instituted on the foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles, which extends itself, in its own right, into every nation, and enjoys the priceless treasure of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the churches.*

Thomas. I can easily imagine, Philip, that you are beginning by this time to think me little else than an obstinate good-for-nothing old doubter, worthy of having for my namesake the doubter of the Apostolic College, who persisted that he would not believe "until he had seen the mark of the nails upon His hands, and had put his finger into the mark of the nails, and had thrust his hand into the wound in His side" (John xx. 25). However, never mind, Philip ; show your patience, and keep going on quietly building up your argument, and perhaps in the end the good-for-nothing old doubter, bad as he may be, may have the grace to yield. So, without picking a quarrel with me, Philip, on account of my doubting, let us see if we cannot find out the particular point in our journey which we have now reached. I admit, then, that you have shown me, in the most full and satisfactory manner, that it is an honourable and

creditable thing for any man to be associated with a power like the Roman Catholic Church, which holds its seat in the city of Rome, and issues its mandates from thence into all the world, receiving offerings into its treasury that flow entirely from the love and free-will of its adherents in every nation under heaven. I am lost in wonder and admiration for the doctrine of a continual sacrifice commemorative of the one august Sacrifice of the Cross. I fully acknowledge that the Bible, from its being merely the letter of a book, is not able to be the guide of men apart from a living interpreter; and I plainly see that the Roman Pontiff is the only person whom men all over the world, and at all times, have looked upon as able to be the living guide of the whole world. I see, of course, that his guidance is the subject of a fierce controversy among men; but the same was predicted even of the Child Jesus by the holy Simeon, who said of Him when He was but an Infant in arms, "Behold a sign that shall be contradicted" (Luke ii. 34); and the very fact itself of this contradiction speaks to my mind more for the guidance being genuine than I can easily tell; for it leaves me, Philip, under the necessity of saying, "Here is a guide adequate to guide the whole family of Adam, in all their national diversities, to unity of doctrine, worship, and discipline; and no rival claimant appears anywhere to dispute his claim. If, therefore, I quarrel with him, where shall I find another such guide, and where shall I meet with another society similar to the one which is content to follow his guidance? for outside his guidance I see every one to be hopelessly at war with his neighbour, without any voice to appeal

“to for the settlement of their strife.” Now, after such a confession as this, Philip, I fancy I hear you say to me, “You hard-headed old doubter! what, then, yet retains you?” Patience, Philip, patience! and since you see that I am willing to listen, shut your eyes to my doubts, and go on to unfold your story. What have you got to say to me this evening?

Philip. To take you, Thomas, in your own vein, I shall propose, this evening, to endeavour to show to you that you have nothing of any real value to lose by coming over to join the communion of the Church of Rome, while you have, on the contrary, every thing to gain by so doing.

Thomas. Well, Philip, this is a plain and an intelligible prospect which you hold out to me. You have only to proceed to the task of showing me the grounds on which you place it before me, and I will listen to you most willingly.

Philip. What is it, Thomas, that induces men to contemplate acquiring for themselves the state of matrimonial felicity prior to their having any clear idea whatever as to where they shall find the particular lady, without whom, nevertheless, it is plain that their design can never be realised? You will answer, that this proceeds from the natural desire that all men have of being able to found, and to possess themselves of, the perfect society of home. And this answer appears to me to be perfectly true and just; for the society of home was instituted and sanctified in Paradise, in the persons of Adam and Eve, as plainly appears from Adam's words on first seeing Eve: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and be joined to his wife” (Gen. ii. 24). And the de-

sire of a home we may safely pronounce to be a sentiment proper to the nobility of man's nature, which has survived the Fall and the expulsion from Paradise, and which has been honoured by the universal voice of men; as appears from the words which Homer puts into the mouth of Ulysses, who wishes the princess Nausicæ that she may be happily married,* as the best acknowledgment that, with all his experience of life, he knew how to make in return for her kindness and protection.

Thomas. I see no difficulty whatever in assenting to all you say, Philip; but I do not see what the conclusion is to be, which you intend to draw from it.

Philip. You must observe, Thomas, that in the same manner as God has instituted the society of home to be a perfect society, founding it upon the mutual love of the father, mother, and offspring for each other, ordering it in truth and justice, through the authority of the father, by which its internal disputes are adjudicated, and its daily life regulated, and sustaining it by the united labours and assiduity of both parents; so, in the same manner, He has instituted His Church a perfect society, on the model of the family, under the authority of one father, with the people of all the world for his family, and dependent upon the united labour and assiduity of both father and mother for the maintenance of the well-being and good estate of the children. To this effect are the words of Pope Pius IX., spoken in his Allo-

* ἄνδρα τε καὶ οἶκον, καὶ ὁμοφροσύνην ἐπάσειαν
ἐσθλὴν, οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦτε κρείττον, καὶ ἀρείον
ἢ ὅθ' ὁμοφρονέοντε νοήμασιν οἶκον ἔχῃτον
ἀνὴρ ἠδὲ γυνή.

Odys. x. 181.

cution of December 18th, 1860 : " The Church was
 " instituted by her Divine Founder as a true and
 " perfect society, which, not being circumscribed by
 " the limits of any countries, is not to be subjected to
 " any civil power, but has the right freely to exercise
 " its own power and jurisdiction in every nation for
 " the salvation of men."

Thomas. Then I presume you mean to infer, Philip, that in the same manner as the original nobility which God gave to the nature of man, very much of which, you say, still survives the ruin and wreck of the Fall, prompts men to seek the perfect society of home and the family-circle for its own sake, and for what it is in itself, independently and prior to all personal attachment to any lady in particular, so the same nobility of nature urges men to seek the perfect society which Jesus Christ has founded, prior to their having any clear understanding where this perfect society is to be found.

Philip. You have perfectly anticipated my meaning, Thomas; and I think the more you consider what I say, the more just you will find it to be. For you will plainly observe, that perfect as the constitution may be on which the society of home is built, still no man of any education whatever is able to rest satisfied with nothing but home. All men naturally seek, besides their own home, a civil status or rank in a social sphere, wider than that of their own homes; and a man is blamed for being mean and narrow-minded, in proportion as his ideas are unreasonably narrowed within the boundaries of the little world immediately surrounding his own home; and, on the contrary, he is praised for being noble and

large-minded, in proportion as he is able to extend his ideas and interests to a larger sphere. Viewed in this respect, I think we must necessarily say, that to be only an ardent Nationalist, and nothing more, is to be, in the true sense of the word, blamably narrow-minded, in the presence of the larger and more perfect society of Jesus Christ, which knows no limits of any nation, but receives the people of all nations into its bosom, as her own children.

Thomas. What you are now saying, Philip, touches upon more than one of the important questions that are fiercely debated at the present moment in the arena of public politics ; therefore, while I am exceedingly interested to hear what views you advocate, take care, Philip, what you say.

Philip. There can be no doubt at all, Thomas, but that mere Nationalism now is only a form of human narrow-mindedness, which all right-minded men should reject. The mere Nationalist, Thomas, is a man who considers that the universe does not stand in need of being ordered to Divine truth, but only to the exaltation of his own particular people ; and for this reason, Nationalism, besides being a form of narrow-mindedness, becomes also the fruitful source of all the wars and revolutions which desolate the earth. Wars, Thomas, but very rarely indeed arise from any noble cause ; as St. James says, " Whence come wars and " strifes among you ? Is it not from your concupiscences, that war in your members ? " (James iv.) Whereas it is said of the work of God, " For that He " takes away wars to the ends of the earth, and breaks " the bow and knaps the arms in sunder, and burneth " the shields with fire " (Ps. xlv. 10). The only way,

Thomas, of accomplishing the universal peace of God on earth is by the union of all the nations of the world together in the one family or sovereign society which Jesus Christ has instituted and has made perfect, and which is not circumscribed, as Pius IX. says, by any limits, but every where possesses the right to exercise its sacred power for the salvation of men.

Thomas. Your doctrine, I think, Philip, will scarcely prove very acceptable to the preachers of Nationalism, who have of late made themselves so busy in the world, crying out for the erection of more separate nationalities, as being so many perfect societies in themselves.

Philip. You must be extremely careful to observe, Thomas, that if Nationalism is now become an obsolete narrow-mindedness, this is owing to the fact of Jesus Christ having come into the world, and to His having founded His own perfect society in it, and to His having invested it with a power and dignity that renders the nationality of former times an obsolete thing. In the old world, Thomas, Nationalism was the highest possible form and manifestation of noble and generous public spirit, and the sentiment,

“Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori”
(III. *Od.* ii. 13),

was the most perfect form of nobility of mind that the world then knew. Thus when Regulus sacrificed himself to secure the ascendancy of Rome over Carthage, nobility of spirit at that time could go no further. It was reserved for God Himself to become Man, and to die, as the very high-priest who condemned Him prophesied, “not for His nation only, “but that He might gather together in one the sons

“ of God who were dispersed” (John xi. 52). If, therefore, Thomas, the Nationalism which was with perfect justice the boast and glory of the old world has now become, what we have said, an obsolete narrow-mindedness, it is the glory of Jesus Christ, and of the perfect society that He has founded in the world, to have supplanted the nation of the old world, with the nobler object of the Church of all nations.

Thomas. Then, Philip, what is the vice which you see in the eager cry that so many persons, Catholics as well as others, raise in the present day, to have the world return to the erection of a greater number of separate nationalities, emancipating themselves from any other control except such as is internal to themselves?

Philip. Have a little patience, Thomas, and I will endeavour to answer your question by and by. Let us first be sure that we understand the true nature of the superiority which is possessed by the society that Jesus Christ has founded over all the national societies of the old world, or, indeed, over any other national societies that may still be formed. You remember, Thomas, that when the Greek Themistocles had compromised himself with his countrymen the Greeks, and when he found it necessary, in consequence, to escape to the Persians, he had then the difficult and unwelcome task of unlearning all his Greek national sympathies, which had grown up with his growth; and on his suddenly finding the necessity of becoming a Persian, he was obliged to step all at once into the existing quarrels and hostilities of the Persians against the Greeks, as a violent partisan on the Persian side. Nothing of this kind, Thomas, can

possibly happen in the perfect society of Jesus Christ. For if a Roman Catholic should judge it to be necessary or expedient to remove his residence, for any good cause, into another province of the Roman Catholic Church, he retains all the friends he had formed from his youth up in his former residence, and, without forfeiting any single existing friendship, he only goes into a new sphere to acquire new friends among those who are just as much his brethren in Jesus Christ as the brethren whom he has left behind. The case with the mere Nationalist, Thomas, the subject of the civil constitution which owns Queen Victoria for its head, is totally different from this ; for here is a something that may be exchanged for the character of a citizen of the United States of America, or for any other nationality,—in the same manner as a man may pull off one coat to put another on ; whereas the character of Roman Catholic, Thomas, accompanies its possessor wherever he goes, and entitles him to the privilege of finding his brother Roman Catholics in every nation under heaven, giving him a claim to their friendship and good offices, no matter in what latitude, or through the medium of what language he may claim them. Every where over the whole earth the authority of the successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, extends ; and wherever any two persons meet in any part of the globe who conjointly recognise this authority of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, their joint recognition of it constitutes them true and real brethren to each other.

Thomas. All that you say, Philip, is, I confess, somewhat new to me, though I cannot see particularly why it ought to be so very new ; and whatever I may

come in the end to understand by it, I still cannot help at once acknowledging the extraordinary combination of ignorance and silliness contained in Earl Russell's assertion that the Roman Catholic religion "*enslaves the soul and confines the intellect.*" As it appears to me, Philip, the danger rather is, lest it should liberate the soul and enlarge the intellect to such an alarming extent, as to imperil a man's entirely forgetting his own country altogether; and you know, Philip, however grand and noble it may be to be able to do all this, still I cannot but fancy that to exact as much as this from every body would be like tearing the very soul itself away from a great number of men, particularly such men as the present race of our countrymen.

Philip. You are a great man for the Bible, Thomas. Listen, then, to what the Bible says to you: "Hear, O daughter, and see; incline thine ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house, and so shall the King desire thy beauty; for He is the Lord thy God, and all shall adore Him" (Ps. xliv. 11). The love of home and of the father's house, Thomas, is beyond all question that which is good and noble, inasmuch as it comes to us from the life of Paradise, where it was sanctified in the persons of Adam and Eve. But when we plainly see that even the heathens exhibit examples which prove that, for the sake of the higher claims of the city over the family, all the love and tender affections of home can be put on one side and trodden under foot,—as witness Horace's celebrated description of the heroism of Regulus,*—

* "Fertur pudicæ conjugis osculum
Parvosque natos ut capitis minor.

Jesus Christ certainly cannot be said to ask any sacrifice of which the nature of man is incapable, when He only proposes to men that they should love the Divine society which He has made perfect and co-extensive with the whole earth, above the love which they give to the particular nation and people among whom they may happen to have been born and reared.

Thomas. I cannot but acknowledge, Philip, the vastly superior nobility of rising above the consideration of family, city, and nation, by which ordinary mortals are enchained to the present earth; and I fully admit that you have made me clearly understand that the Roman Catholic Church offers to every one a membership in a perfect society that is co-extensive with the whole globe. I come back, however, now to my former question, as to what is the vice which you see in the present vehemently eager cry of so very many people for the erection of new separate nationalities; and I wish further to ask on what terms the various existing nationalities of the world are to be considered as standing to the Church of all the Nations, which Jesus Christ has instituted?

A se removisse et virilem
Torvus humi posuisse vultum.

Donec labantes consilio Patres
Firmaret auctor nunquam alias dato,
Interque morientes amicos
Egregius properaret exul.

Atqui sciebat quæ sibi barbarus
Tortor pararet, non aliter tamen
Dimovit obstantes propinquos
Et populum redivit morantem."

III. *Od.* v.

Philip. You have, perhaps a little unconsciously, Thomas, asked a question, in the answer to which the whole system of the politics of the entire world is involved. Let us see, however, if we cannot arrive together, by a simple process, at some satisfactory solution of the difficulty which it contains. First of all, Thomas, let us contemplate an ever-memorable example of a Divine judgment falling heavily upon a people who endeavoured to make the designs of God give way before their own purely national ideas. The cherished idea of the Hebrew people was, as you well know, their own nationality, which, of all people of the whole earth, they had the best right to regard as something sacred. And the very reason, Philip, which the Council of the High-Priests alleged as showing the necessity for their having Jesus Christ put to death was, that otherwise all people would believe in Him, and *then*, they said, "the Romans will come, and will take away our place and our nation" (John xi. 48). To save, therefore, their place and their nation, Thomas, the chief council of the Hebrew people caused Jesus Christ to be seized, and in the end extorted His crucifixion from Pontius Pilate. Now, Thomas, have the Hebrews been able to preserve their nationality by sacrificing Jesus Christ to it, and has the event justified their policy, as they blindly thought it would?

Thomas. No, Philip. This Hebrew people up to the present moment exhibits, as I think, the most remarkable phenomenon that I know any where on the face of the entire earth. For, from the day that they joined in crucifying Jesus Christ up to the present hour, they have never been able to save any portion of the nationality which they proposed to themselves

to preserve and to secure by having Him put to death. And yet, nevertheless, their dispersion into all lands has not caused them to die out. They remain, up to this day, a mere multitude of Hebrews, without the shadow of any Hebrew nationality, and apparently impotent to entertain so much as the idea of recovering it. The fever for new nationalities that has carried away so many other people does not appear to have in any way affected them.

Philip. Then you will perceive, Thomas, that the example of the total ruin and downfall of the Hebrew nationality becomes a warning to all other people that the crucifying of Jesus Christ is not the way to succeed in preserving their own nationality.

Thomas. I admit what you say, Philip, but I cannot at all tell how you intend to apply it; for St. Paul says, "Jesus Christ, being dead, dieth no more, and death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9). How, therefore, will the other nations, Philip, if they were ever so much inclined, be in any way able to crucify Jesus Christ as the Jews did?

Philip. If the putting Jesus Christ to death, Thomas, has brought upon the Hebrew people the stigma which they bear to this very hour, before the whole world, of being every where outcasts, unable to recover the least portion of their nationality,—this, I think, Thomas, appears, notwithstanding that your objection holds as to the strict letter, to convey a very striking warning to all the other people of the world, that their persecuting Jesus Christ will be very likely in the end to bring not a little of the same ruin on their nationality as the putting Jesus Christ to death has brought on the nationality of the Hebrews. Now

you will say to me, Thomas, But how are the nations to be able to persecute Jesus Christ, any more than they are able to crucify Him? I will answer you, Thomas. When Jesus Christ appeared to St. Paul, as the latter was on his way to Damascus, He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" How was Saul, then, persecuting Jesus Christ? Exactly in the same way, Thomas, in which the nations of the world have it now in their power to persecute Him, viz. by casting the members of His Church into prison; by inflicting penal laws upon them; by subjecting them to outlawry and civil disabilities; and by proposing to them formulas to swear incompatible with their faith. All these, and many others of a like kind, are so many ways, Thomas, by which the nations of the world have it in their power to persecute Jesus Christ; and it has frequently happened, and will probably still continue to happen, that, imitating the blindness of the Jews, many other nations, to the end of the world, will think that these persecutions are required for the express purpose of insuring the security, and providing for the stability, of their own nationalities.

Thomas. But, Philip, if you say that the society of Jesus Christ receives all people into itself, is it not by this fact exactly the very kind of power that promises to absorb and swallow up the nation in itself, in so alarming a manner that you can easily account for the horror and dread that all violent national partisans will have of a power so universal and so unlimited in its jurisdiction?

Philip. The feeling you describe, Thomas, is nothing new in the world. The elders of Madian said of the Israel that had been delivered out of Egypt,

"This people will destroy all that dwell in our borders, as the ox licketh up the grass to the roots" (Num. xxii. 4). But so far, Thomas, from the perfect society of Jesus Christ being really the destroyer of nationalities, the only true safety and security of nations consists in their coming to subsist as Christian nations in the bosom of the perfect society of Jesus Christ. It is to this great truth that the Scripture prophecy points, where the prophet says, "that the kingdom and people that will not serve Thee shall perish, and the Gentiles shall be wasted with desolation" (Isaias lx. 12). The whole of the present civilised nations of Europe owe all that they now possess of nationality entirely to the fostering care of the Roman Catholic Church, without which they would have remained just the same wild savages and barbarians that their forefathers were.

Thomas. Then, Philip, if the Roman Catholic Church is, as you say, the mother and parent of nationalities, what can possibly be the vice of the present prevailing Nationalist spirit, that does but cry out for the regeneration of these nationalities?

Philip. Not entirely to decline your question, Thomas, let me answer it briefly by saying that the vice of the present Nationalist movement appears to me to consist in the casting away the Christian-benediction, in which the great strength of the nation consists, and in the going back to the unblessed nation of the unbelieving world. Perhaps St. Paul might forbear to say of this movement that its leaders are in every case men who "glory in their shame;" but I cannot but think he would say at least of the Roman Catholics who are led away by it: "But now,

“ after you have known God, and are known of God,
“ how is it that you are turned again to the infirm
“ and beggarly elements, to which you desire to be a
“ second time in bondage?” (Gal. iv. 9.) Thomas,
because the nations which have enjoyed the blessing
of St. Peter have been thereby raised to a marvellous
honour and dignity, wise men ought not to allow
themselves to be deceived into thinking that they
can possibly, by any mere human skill, suddenly
create the same thing as that which has slowly grown
up to power and dignity under the grace and blessing
of God. The Christian nation which subsists in
great honour and glory in the bosom of the Church
is beyond all question a glorious and noble object;
but this Nationalist movement, Thomas, has the insane
presumption and blindness to think that it is
in the power of mere human sagacity,—such as was
attributed to the late Count Cavour,—to construct the
social fabric of a nation, outside the perfect society
of Jesus Christ, not only without owning any debt of
gratitude to it, but even directly disowning the obligation
of its most sacred laws, and setting up, in
short, the legislative blindness and short-sightedness
of men against the eternal wisdom of God that has
been manifested to men in Jesus Christ. One and
all of these Nationalist attempts, Thomas, must come
to exactly the same ruin and catastrophe as that which
the whole world sees to have befallen the nationality
of the Hebrews ; and if the Hebrew people failed, in
their contest with Jesus Christ, to gain a victory over
Him, no other nation of the world need flatter itself
that it will be able to succeed any better.

Thomas. Then, Philip, I understand you to say,

that while the perfect society of Jesus Christ receives nations into itself equally the same as individuals, and blesses the nationalities which it so receives, raising them to far higher dignity and glory as Christian nations than they ever could have acquired by remaining isolated by themselves, it still teaches all people to fix their hearts and affections on itself, and not to be mere narrow-minded Nationalists; but to have the noble-minded sentiments becoming the members of a society which has not only a Divine title to possess and to renew the face of the present earth, but has a glorious future awaiting it in the world that is to come.

Philip. Exactly, Thomas; and let us consider together with what perfect truth the Church teaches this lesson. All men look forward to die; and who that is not totally blinded by the fascinations of the present world could ever think it could be worth his while to give his heart and affections to any other society than to the perfect society which has the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, for its Founder? He would say to himself, Can I have any ground whatever for thinking that I shall find either the British, or the French, or any other national power reappearing in the future world? And if I am never to see them again, to what purpose shall I now give my heart and affections to a thing that must pass away, when by giving them to the society of Jesus Christ I shall give them to that which is eternal, and which, however it may now be in a state of humiliation and suffering, brought upon it by the sins and follies of its own members, is still the kingdom of the King of which there is no end?

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Thomas. I cannot possibly contest the perfect justice of what you say, Philip ; and I greatly desire you to continue your subject, for I wish to hear you describe all the advantages that you say are to be gained by belonging to this perfect society which Jesus Christ has founded.

Philip. Then, Thomas, you entirely concede to me my first proposition, that the nobility of our nature, which is God's good gift to us, prompts and urges all men to enter into the perfect society of Jesus Christ, and to refuse to be content with any thing that is merely local or national, and consequently falls short of it. This is an important point gained, that we must not by any means forget or allow to be lost sight of. Now as to the particular tangible advantages, Thomas, that you wish me to explain to you ; possibly in such times, when it was the ordinary lot of most men to spend their lives within a radius of some three or four miles of their own door, this extension of the Christian society over the whole world tended perhaps more to confer a personal dignity than to be productive of any very immediately tangible results. However, Thomas, now, in these days of rapid locomotion, when the radius of a thousand miles from a man's own home goes for very little, the Roman Catholic, who is a pious and religious man, has very manifestly not a few tangible advantages over his neighbour, who follows nothing except his national or local form of worship. For wherever the Roman Catholic is, he is nearly sure to find his own Roman Catholic altar, with its Sacrifice of the Mass, together with his brethren in the faith ready to welcome him among them ; whereas the

member of the poor little National Church, or the still poorer and more forlorn local sect, is made, in spite of himself, to feel very small indeed when modern locomotion carries him beyond their little familiar limits.

Thomas. What you say here, Philip, is perfectly true; and I have often experienced its truth myself. I have frequently felt extremely small, I can assure you, in the towns of Italy, on the Sundays as they came round, to find some among my companions going gaily off to any of their churches that took their fancy, while poor I and a few other disconsolate countrymen had to wander about in search of our national service, to try if it was to be found in some out-of-the-way place. In fact, such was the power and attraction of a multitude, Philip, that I used often, without knowing why, to find myself carried along with the crowd into their churches.

Philip. I do not know also, Thomas, how the idea may strike you, but to me there is an almost inexpressible charm and comfort in the very feeling of knowing myself to be one of the great multitude that has a bond of brotherhood with itself, which is coextensive with the world, and superior to all the distinctions of nations and professions and particular ways of life. The soldier in a large and well-appointed army, I fancy, Thomas, must feel himself individually a far stronger and better man than if he knew himself to belong only to a scanty and poorly-equipped expedition. This is the feeling of social strength and inward satisfaction that it is in the power of every Roman Catholic to possess, apart from the least arrogance and presumption; for in entertaining the feeling, he is only rendering a grateful homage to the power of Jesus

Christ, through which alone it comes to pass that his faith commands the whole world.

Thomas. I entirely agree with what you say, Philip, and pray you to continue your subject.

Philip. We must not, however, Thomas, seem to make more of the fact of the extension of the Roman Catholic Church into all countries than what is its legitimate value, as a testimony to the gifts with which Jesus Christ has endowed it. St. Paul says, "If God be with us, who shall be against us? and He that did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how with Him hath He not given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 31); and again the same St. Paul says, "Whether things present, or things future, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is of God" (1 Cor. iii. 22). What single good thing is there, Thomas, that does not belong, by the gift of Jesus Christ, to the Roman Catholic communion? what single thing is there by which the life of men is ennobled upon earth, of which the Apostolic See of Rome has not been the nurse and the instructress for all the different nations of the world that have placed themselves under her shield and protection? From whence did the men come who taught the arts and sciences to the wild barbarians who invaded the old Empire of Rome and destroyed it? and who was the mother of those to whom the poet's words apply:

"Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes"?

Virgil, *Æneid*, lib. vi.

If every Roman Catholic, Thomas, is not in a reasonable measure an honour to humanity, it is absolutely and entirely traceable either directly to his own

folly and perversity, or to his allowing himself to be misled by the blindness and sins of others.

Thomas. The account you give of the matter, Philip, appears to me very clear and satisfactory, though of course I dare say you know very well that it is quite another sort of representation to what I have been in the habit of hearing.

Philip. Yes, Thomas ; but all flows from the words of St. Paul, "*how with Him hath He not given us all things ?*" You have no doubt noticed in all the Roman Catholic churches into which you may have strayed a particular altar, before which a lamp is suspended that is always kept burning. This lamp, Thomas, is an indication to the visitor to the church that the Sacred Body of Jesus Christ is present on that altar. You always notice that no Roman Catholic ever passes before that altar without bending the knee, and never enters a church where the lamp indicates the Divine Presence in the church without his first movement being directed towards that altar, where he will be seen to kneel down, and to address at least a short prayer to the Divine Presence that resides there, before he considers himself at liberty to look round on any works of art which may happen to be in the church.

Thomas. I have often noticed what you now describe, Philip ; but I do not remember ever having sought for an explanation of it. My feeling about scenes in Roman Catholic churches has always been a kind of desire to learn more about them, without precisely knowing with what to begin to inquire, and whom to ask.

Philip. I shall probably give you, Thomas, the

best notion as to what the Roman Catholic doctrine on this most sacred subject really is, by a direct citation of the words themselves of the Catechism of the Council of Trent. "There is, of a truth, nothing," says this Catechism, "that can be added to the joy " and advantage of the faithful, when they contemplate the dignity of this most lofty Sacrament. " For, in the first place, they understand how great is " the perfection of the evangelical law, to which it " has been given to possess in reality that which was " only shadowed during the times of the Mosaic " covenant. Wherefore it has been well said by St. " Dionysius, 'that our Church holds a middle place " between the Synagogue and the Heavenly Jerusalem, and on this account partakes of the nature of " both.' The faithful, consequently, can never sufficiently wonder at the perfection of Holy Church, " and at the height of its glory, when it is seen that " there is only one step between themselves and the " beatitude of heaven. For we have this in common " between ourselves and the dwellers in heaven, that " both have Christ, God and Man, present among " them; while the one single step by which we differ " from them is, that they, being in His presence, " directly enjoy the blessed vision, whereas we venerate Him with a firm and constant faith, as present " amongst us, though removed from the sense of " sight, and hiding Himself in a marvellous covering " of sacred mysteries" (part ii. ch. iv. § 29).

Thomas. I admit, Philip, that there seems to be nothing more required except the faith to believe so great, so wonderful, and so heavenly a doctrine. I greatly lament my unbelieving head and heavy heart,

that I seem still to hold out ; however, Philip, have patience with me still.

Philip. Have I, then, now redeemed my promise, Thomas, of showing you that you have far more to gain by becoming a Roman Catholic than you have to lose?

Thomas. You have done so, Philip, to my entire satisfaction ; and I shall be ready to renew our conversation as soon as ever you can spare another afternoon. Let it be next Sunday, if you possibly can.

Philip. I am agreed ; and next Sunday, please God, we will continue our subject.

DIALOGUE NINTH.

THE DIVINE INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENTS ; OR, THE BEAUTIFUL AND IMPARTIAL ORDER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD UPON EARTH, AND THE PERFECT PEACE AND TRANQUILLITY OF MIND THAT IS ENJOYED BY ITS SUBJECTS.

SCENE : MR. THOMAS GOODMAN'S *private sitting-room*. PHILIP and THOMAS are seated near the open window looking out on the garden.

PHILIP explains to THOMAS the doctrine of the Divine Institution of the Sacraments, and shows him the beautiful order and impartiality of the gifts of Divine grace, and the happy fruit of a perfectly calm and rational peace of mind that results from the use of the Sacraments, particularly of the Sacrament of Penance. Before parting, PHILIP suggests an explanation why the Scripture precept of anointing the sick with oil is invariably disobeyed by those who have separated from the Church of Rome.

Thomas. I fear, Philip, I must appear to you to have fallen sadly short of all your charitable anticipations, and that you have but little reason to be pleased with me now on the score of docility. But I can, notwithstanding, give you a very hearty welcome. And as for my want of progress, I hope it may be more apparent than real ; but if it were otherwise, incredulity is much too old-standing an evil in the world to cause you any great surprise ; and

“O miseræ hominum mentes, ô pectora cæca !”
(*Lucretius*, lib. ii. 14)

was the exclamation of a classic poet, even before the

Christian times. However, as it is possible that even incredulity itself may in the end be overcome, I hope you will still persevere in your work of charity.

Philip. I am quite content to do so if you are, Thomas ; so now let us see what we must next take in hand, in order to make good another clear and solid step in advance. You know the old proverb which says, "The king can order his horse to be led to the water ; but neither the king nor all the king's men can make him drink." No one will deny but that he is indeed a most kind friend and benefactor, and worthy of every possible praise, who, not satisfied with merely putting the traveller into the right road that leads to the city which is to be the end of his journey, also proceeds to furnish him with a perfectly trustworthy guide, with most excellent company on the way, and likewise with a most ample provision of every thing that a traveller can possibly need. But what is to be done, Thomas, if, when all is thus amply provided by the benefactor, the very traveller himself should be the person to refuse to go forward ? What more can the kind friend and benefactor, who has already so nobly and generously performed his part, do now, when the very wayfarer himself becomes the person who perversely chooses to build some temporary habitation for himself, away from the high-road, where he is seen senselessly to fritter away the time that has been given to him for his journey, apparently bent upon thinking of any thing rather than of the inevitable day when the gates of the city will be finally shut against him, and when the temporary habitation he has made for himself will be inexorably taken away from him ?

Thomas. There is another proverb, Philip, with which you are no doubt quite familiar, "that birds " that can sing and won't sing must be made to " sing;" but I confess I do not see how the kind of compulsion at which it hints can be very easily applied to the case which you suppose.

Philip. I know of nothing, Thomas, in the Sacred Writ, which gives the least countenance to the notion that God will use any direct compulsion to force any man forward to the holy city, who is not himself willing to go there freely and of his own accord. Still no Christian will readily believe that God could have become a Man in order to lead a vast company of His fellow-men to the celestial city, without His knowing what was in the heart of men, by which they were to be moved freely, and of their own accord, to enter upon and diligently to pursue their journey thitherwards. If therefore spiritual gifts and graces, infused into their minds by the operation of God the Holy Ghost, should prove to be that which is most calculated to set them on fire, as it were, and to inflame them with the love of the celestial city, as well as to assist them on their journey to it, the very purpose itself of love and mercy for which Jesus Christ Himself became a Man warrants us in expecting that He would establish this communication between God the Holy Ghost and the hearts and minds of men, as being the one thing which was now needed to put the finishing stroke to His own work.

Thomas. What you say, Philip, appears to me, as far as I can judge, perfectly true, and quite conformable to all that I know of the Christian religion. I must, no doubt, have often before heard the grace of

God spoken of in this way in sermons ; but then we are accustomed to hear very many things said in sermons which do not make the impression they ought to make, and I am consequently not quite sure that what you have been saying is not entirely new to me.

Philip. As a reader of Scripture, however, Thomas, you will readily call to mind that our Lord distinctly promises the coming of One whose office it was to be to perfect and complete His own work : “ When He “ shall come, the Spirit of Truth, whom I shall send “ you from the Father, He shall teach you all truth. “ For He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever “ things He shall hear, the same shall He speak, and “ He shall tell you of things to come. He shall glorify “ Me ; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall communicate it to you” (John xvi. 13). The outpouring of the divine Spirit of Truth, Thomas, which took place at the day of Pentecost, and which has continued ever since, has of course not been without producing many very visible effects in the world ; among which the particular one that bears most directly upon our inquiry is, that those who have received the gifts of Divine grace acquire thereby a perceptible taste and relish for what St. Paul calls “ the things of the Spirit,” or “ the things that are from above” (Col. iii. 1) ; and this taste or relish serves to distinguish them from those whom St. Paul speaks of under the description of “ animal or sensual men, who have no discernment of the things of the Spirit” (1 Cor. ii. 14) ; and hence St. Paul’s earnest admonition to the Christian people, “ Have your relish for those things which “ are from above, and not for those things which are “ upon the earth” (Col. iii. 2).

Thomas. I have often heard mention made of the distinction of which you are speaking, Philip; and the words of St. Paul with reference to it are familiar to me.

Philip. The distinction, Thomas, is one that we should attend to, as it is of no little importance to our subject; and St. Augustine founds his doctrine upon it, that from the beginning of the world the possession of the earth has been disputed by two different companies, to which he gives respectively the names of the Earthly City (*terrena civitas*) and the Heavenly City or the City of God (*civitas celestis*). The former of these two he describes as follows: "The Earthly City
" has only an existence of limited duration (for after
" it shall have been sentenced to eternal punishment
" with the devil, it will be no city all), and it possesses
" its good things exclusively in the present life, in
" the enjoyment of which it takes its delight, according to the kind of pleasure that is to be found in
" the sort of things over which it exercises dominion.
" Its good things, however, are not of that kind which
" cause no disturbance to their votaries, and, in consequence, this earthly city is for the most part divided against itself, by quarrels, wars, and battles,
" in which it seeks deadly and destructive victories" (*The City of God*, book xv. chap. 4). In a preceding chapter St. Augustine had written, "a nature vitiated
" by sin produces the citizens of the Earthly City;
" while grace, liberating from sin, has produced the
" citizens of the Heavenly City" (book xv. c. 2).

Thomas. I listen, Philip, very willingly to all that you are now saying; but I confess I have not at present been able to see to what particular subject you intend to make it serve as the introduction.

Philip. The particular subject which I am endeavouring to prepare the way to introduce to you, Thomas, is the Divine institution of the seven Sacraments, by means of which, according to the doctrine of the Council of Trent, "all true justice either derives its beginning, or acquires its increase, or is recovered in the event of its coming to be lost" (Preamble to sess. vii.); and you can scarcely think how much reflection and anxiety this subject has already occasioned me on your account, from the feeling that the field of doctrine which it opens to us is so exceedingly extensive, that nothing would be easier for us than to lose ourselves, and so to come to no result.

Thomas. I place myself entirely in your hands, Philip, to make your own selection of the points of doctrine that you think best suited to my case.

Philip. It appears to me, then, that we shall best map-out our afternoon's work by my undertaking to explain to you the three following points: (1) How the Divine institution of the Sacraments justifies the perfect impartiality of God in the distribution of the gifts of His grace; (2) how God has provided for the Sacraments being perfectly accessible to all men, and for their administration never failing; and (3) that we should see how the wisdom of God has provided for the receivers obtaining a perfect peace and tranquillity of mind, through their being preserved from all undue conceit and presumption on the one hand, and on the other from all liability to doubt and despair.

Thomas. If you are able, Philip, to show all this to me in a clear and convincing manner, I shall for ever have cause to make you my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments.

Philip. Our first step to this end, Thomas, must be to see that we rightly understand what is meant by a sacrament. A sacrament, according to St. Augustine's definition, is "an outward and visible sign of a grace that is invisible, instituted for our justification;" and, according to the still more explicit definition of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "it is a thing subject to the senses, which, by virtue of the institution of God, possesses the power both of effecting and also of signifying our justification and sanctification" (Catech. Con. Trid., pt. ii. § 10). From these words, then, Thomas, we are easily able to gather, that a sacrament is a something instituted and set up by Jesus Christ in His Church, which possesses in virtue of His gift such an outward and visible form, cognisable to the senses, that it may be approached with the necessary facility by all men; at the same time that each one who does elect to come, with the proper religious dispositions, will infallibly receive through it the Divine gift of grace which Jesus Christ has irrevocably pledged Himself to give.

Thomas. I think, Philip, we have now a perfectly clear idea before us of what is meant by a sacrament, viz. that it is something that has a visible matter and form, to which all persons can be invited to make their approach, and to which God has irrevocably pledged the gifts of His Holy Spirit.

Philip. Precisely, Thomas; and you will further see without difficulty, that the institution of the Sacraments requires,—in order, as our Lord says, "that the candle which has been lighted may not be put under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house" (Matt. v. 15),

—to be followed up by the mission of a sufficient company of preachers into the whole world, to instruct the inhabitants of all the earth in the nature of the Divine gifts that are communicated through the Sacraments, so as to persuade and induce them to present themselves to receive them. This, Thomas, was the first part of the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Apostles,—to go out into all the nations as preachers, and to preach the Gospel to every creature; and the result of this Divine commission has been, that, from the day of Pentecost up to the present hour, a vast company of preachers has been continually engaged in the work of inviting men to these Sacraments, without any preference of the civilised man over the barbarian, of the free man over the slave, or of the white man over the black man. Here then, Thomas, you have, in this indefectible living body of preachers, incessantly engaged in urging and inviting men to come to the Sacraments, which God has made open to all, the practical proof, clearly laid before you, of the perfect and absolute impartiality of God in the distribution of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and here you see how God justifies His dealings with men, as One who truly desires, according to the words of St. Paul, that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth, and should be saved (1 Tim. ii. 4); while at the same time He will use no other force or compulsion beyond that which the preacher can legitimately exercise by the efficacy of his persuasions.

Thomas. I have nothing whatever, Philip, to object to what you place before me; on the contrary, I am lost in admiration at the sight of a work going on in the world, of which I had no adequate idea whatever

before. I cannot however, Philip, fail to observe, how very much in this work of the Christian religion appears to depend entirely on the personal fidelity of the preacher.

Philip. Thomas, we shall always do well to remember that our Lord, in becoming a Man to save His fellow-men, undertook a work on their behalf into the plan of which it did not enter to employ the ministry of angels (on whose fidelity He would have been able at all times perfectly to rely), but only the ministry and labour of men, on whose fidelity He cannot reckon in by any means the same perfect manner, being liable to be betrayed by direct treachery (as the ever-memorable example of the disciple Judas too plainly shows), and also to be injured by the follies and indiscretions of His servants. However, you remember the words spoken to St. Paul in his ecstasy: "My strength is perfected in weakness" (2 Cor. xv.). And we have now to see, with a special reference to our second point, how Jesus Christ justifies His omnipotence as God, in His being able, out of the weak elements of men, and notwithstanding their weakness, to construct an indefectible ministry for the unfailing supply of the Sacraments, which He has instituted to be the channels of His grace.

Thomas. Pray explain to me, Philip, fully, how this is done.

Philip. It is the nature of a sacrament, as you will probably have known, to require a minister in order to its existence; according to St. Augustine's maxim, "Accedit elemento verbum, et fit sacramentum." For it is the union of the matter with the form, as theologians say, which constitutes the sacrament; and

the form is that which is given by the word of the minister of the sacrament. Consequently, in order to the Sacraments becoming universally accessible all over the world, as channels of the gifts of the Holy Ghost for all men, it is a condition inseparable from their nature as Sacraments, that their proper ministers should also be spread, and be able to maintain themselves, all over the world. It is, then, this marvellous work of creating and keeping up this numerous living body of the proper ministers of the Sacraments, which Jesus Christ has from the beginning maintained, and now maintains throughout the world, upon the foundation of the Apostle Peter; as witness His words, "Thou art Peter; and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18).

Thomas. Explain to me, Philip, how you come to say that this work of providing and maintaining an effective body of the ministers of the Sacraments all over the world is built, and continues to be still maintained, upon the foundation of the Apostle Peter; for what you say, I confess, appears to be somewhat mysterious.

Philip. The Apostle Peter, in a certain sense, Thomas, never dies; for he is the first of a line of successors by whom he is perpetually represented, and who will continue, to the end of the world, to be at the head of the great company of the Bishops, of their clergy, and others on whom the duty of administering these Sacraments devolves. You will no doubt remember, Thomas, in common with the rest of the world, having witnessed the marvellous spectacle of the Roman Catholic Episcopate from all lands gathered

round the person of St. Peter's present living successor, Pius IX., last year (A.D. 1862), on the occasion of the canonisation of the twenty-six Japanese martyrs. Possibly, however, you may not have carefully noticed the remarkable words which they conjointly addressed to him, and which I will now quote to you : "Thou art
 " the unfailing light for the people of the world, prepared by the Divine Wisdom. Thou art the rock
 " and the foundation-stone of the Church, against
 " which the gates of hell shall not prevail. When
 " thou speakest, we hear Peter ; when thou decreest,
 " we obey Christ."* You may form some idea also, Thomas, how little likely the supply of the Sacraments is to fail, when, after eighteen centuries of the self-same service, in which different generations have played their part, you hear the whole Catholic Episcopate protesting before the world to St. Peter's successor, that, rather than be unfaithful to their ministry, " they are all ready to go to prison and to death
 " with him."

Thomas. I see, Philip, that the Church of Rome is far stronger than its adversaries are willing to think ; and I must cheerfully confess that a power which can thus bind the most distant people together in one and the same service, and command their fidelity, even to prison and death, for the ministry which it gives into their hands, can come from no one but from God alone. Pray, Philip, for your poor friend's

* "Tu populus lumen indeficiens, a Divinâ Sapientiâ præparatum. Tu Petra es et ipsius Ecclesiæ fundamentum, contra quod inferorum portæ nunquam prævalebunt. Te loquente Petrum audimus, te decernente Christo obtemperamus. . . .
 "Nos tecum et ad carcerem et ad mortem ire paratos esse."
Antistitum protestatio, ex typographia l'Osservatore Romano.

unbelief; for how can I dare to resist the evidence of so great a work, that displays itself before me, embracing the whole world under the cover of its wings?

Philip. Here then, Thomas, are two of our points disposed of to your satisfaction. As regards the third point, which is perhaps the one that most comes home to each man's own heart, viz. the calm peace and rational tranquillity of mind which result to the receivers of the Sacraments, as the reward of their faith,—this I think will be best shown by our going at once to real life, to see what result the application of such a test will yield.

Thomas. By all means, Philip; there is nothing like real life as the test of a doctrine, if it can only be properly and sufficiently applied.

Philip. At least, Thomas, let us make the attempt. I will suppose you, then, to meet with an acquaintance, who tells you that he has lately received an internal assurance, which he calls his conversion, that his sins are all forgiven, and that he is now completely in the grace and favour of God, and perfectly certain of going to heaven. The impression which this at first makes upon you will be to cause you to say to yourself, At all events, this good man is on the best possible terms with himself, whatever he may be with God Almighty; but how am I to know, you will go on to say, that he is not the victim of some diabolic delusion? Under any circumstances the following dilemma must arise: either this man positively is the victim of some diabolic delusion, or God must have some marked partiality and respect of persons; for without any ostensible justification, here is a man who has received the wonderful grace of the free re-

mission of all his sins, of which his neighbour stands just as much in need as he does, yet without having received it. Now this, you will say, is plainly impossible; because it is contrary to the Scripture, which declares that with God there is no respect of persons (1 Pet. i. 17); and it must of course be incomparably more probable that this particular man is, unconsciously to himself, the victim of a diabolic delusion, than that God should suffer His even-handed justice publicly to lie open to the accusation expressed in the lines of the poet :

“ Else God were partial, and to some denied '
The means His justice should for all provide”
(Dryden's *Religio Laici*).

Yet you will not fail to perceive, that, if this is the conclusion to which you must of necessity come, as regards the truth and reality of a grace in any particular instance, where there has been no interposition of a sacrament to authenticate the gift, another person must also for the self-same reasons conclude exactly the same as regards the truth of your having received such a grace, however well persuaded you might be yourself that you had certainly received it; and thus you may most plainly see, Thomas, that outside the Divine institution of the Sacraments, all is reduced either to doubt or to presumption, and all becomes one vast scene of despair and arrogance, mingled together in the wildest confusion.

Thomas. I do not see how I am to resist the truth of what you say, Philip; but cannot you complete the case, and give me an idea of the calm and rational peace of mind which you describe as coming through the Sacraments; and show me also how all this wild

work of mixing pride and despair, doubt and presumption, together, is remedied by their institution ?

Philip. You must have a little patience, Thomas, to listen, if I am to do this. However, let us take a case, such as must occur over and over again in actual life, viz. that of a missionary coming for the first time to a village of heathens, of which let us place the scene in New Zealand. The missionary, then, who has previously acquired enough of the Maori language, presents himself at the pah, or village; and, introducing himself as politely as possible to the chief and the senior inhabitants, announces his errand as a preacher of the Christian Gospel. He obtains a hearing, and proceeds to expound to them the various articles of the Apostles' Creed. Coming to the article, "the forgiveness of sins," he explains to them the doctrine of the Sacrament of Baptism; which he tells them has been instituted by Jesus Christ to confer forgiveness of all sins on its receivers, and invites them all to come to it. In due time, we suppose them all to receive baptism, and the whole village then becomes Christian. Here, Thomas, you may see, as plainly as possible, that there is neither presumption nor preference, for all have had to conform to the conditions, to which all have been equally invited. Some few, indeed, may have refused the invitation; but even if so, God has not excluded any one, neither has He chosen any one by preference. All have, in the freest possible manner, made their choice for themselves; and against the possibility of any doubt hereafter arising, there stands the solemn function of the baptism as a tangible security to reassure every one's mind, that God

has fulfilled His own promise to which He has irrevocably bound Himself.

Thomas. I believe I must grant you, Philip, all you say ; and I cannot but own how much I ought to admire the wonderful provision that is here plainly made for imparting a perfect peace and tranquillity of mind to every devout comer to a sacrament.

Philip. But then, Thomas, as a wise man, must you not also admit that we have gained a point here that is practically all-important? For what, let me ask you, can compare in this life with the blessing of a calm and quiet mind, which, being at peace with God and itself, diffuses a sweet odour of peace to all around? You remember the lines in Dr. Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes :"

" Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned ;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill ;
For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill."

Surely, Thomas, here is something for you, if you are a wise and prudent man, personally to appreciate and desire. The Roman Catholic religion, you see, is quite within your reach ; and God is as good to you as to any one else, offering you these Sacraments, as far as they may suit your case, as freely as to any other living man in the whole world.

Thomas. I confess that you bring the question home to me, Philip, and I must of course not fail to reflect on what you say. However, you tell me the Sacraments, as instituted by Jesus Christ, are seven in number ; what is your authority for this statement ? and what is the reason, if any, why they should be seven in number, and not either more or less ?

Philip. My authority, Thomas, is the Council of Trent, which defines the doctrine in the first Canon of its seventh session: "If any man shall say that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or that they are more or fewer than seven,—to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony,—or that any one of these is not truly and properly a Sacrament, let him be anathema." To explain to you, however, the reason why they should be seven in number, and not more nor less, would be taking up your time more than it is at all necessary to do at present.*

Thomas. Never mind, Philip; we are masters of our own time, and I should like to hear the reason.

Philip. If I am to explain the reason to you, Thomas, I must do so briefly, and I am afraid that it will suffer in the attempt. But, however, let us try. The Sacraments, then are said, in theological language, to make and to sustain the mystical body of Christ; that is to say, in other words, the Church, or the company of the faithful, according to St. Augustine's dictum, "grace, liberating from sin, produces (*i.e.* through the Sacraments) the citizens of the Heavenly City." According to St. Thomas of Aquin and St. Bonaventure, the great Church-doctors of the thirteenth century, God has, with wonderful wisdom, instituted an admirable and beautiful analogy between the order of grace and the order of nature; and this analogy es-

* See the Author's work, *The Seven Sacraments, or the Seven Pillars of the House of Wisdom*, illustrated by the corresponding types of the Old Testament. (London: Burns and Lambert.)

pecially appears in the particular institution of the seven Sacraments, and forms the basis of the reason, which I am now to explain, for their being neither more nor less than seven in number. The first three—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist—correspond respectively to the three prominent features of human life, viz. the entrance into the world by natural birth, the daily growth and strengthening of the faculties after birth, and the necessity of daily food to the maintenance of the health and capacity of the man for the performance of all his various functions. The Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction correspond respectively to the medicinal remedies which are necessary to human life, both where there is a certain hope of recovery, and likewise where death appears imminent. The Sacrament of Orders provides the rulers and pastors, in their several ranks, for the government and direction of the company of the faithful, and corresponds in this respect to the institution of government in the civil order; while the Sacrament of Matrimony is founded on the natural contract of marriage, which it raises to the dignity and blest estate of a Sacrament of the New Law of Jesus Christ. Thus, you see, Thomas, there is a very intelligible and beautiful reason to be given for the Divine institution of the Sacraments being seven in number, and neither more nor less.

Thomas. Your explanation is, I confess, quite new to me, and it more than leads me to suspect how much we are the losers in not being better acquainted with the writings of these great lights of the Middle Ages. However, Philip,—to go on with our subject,—you give me to understand that the fruit of a calm

and rational peace of mind belongs to the institution of the Sacraments generally, and must of course be true of each separately, and consequently true of the Sacrament of Penance in particular. Now, as you cannot but be aware of the incessant outcry that is raised against the practice of confession, which forms part of it, I should be very glad to hear you explain to me in what, in particular, this peace of mind consists which you say is produced by the Sacrament of Penance.

Philip. If you were to make inquiries, Thomas, you would ascertain that the persons who come to the confessional once are almost always the persons who are the readiest to come the second time, and the third time, and so forth; so that it is fairly to be presumed that they taste in it something which is sweet and pacifying, seeing that the power is plainly there which brings them back to it again and again, entirely of their own free will; and thus, by the testimony of those whose knowledge is the knowledge of personal experience, it appears by no means the inhuman institution which it is pronounced to be by those who, knowing nothing whatever about it from experience, do nothing but blindly give the reins to their own hostile imaginations. Again, Thomas, you may see that the priests who administer it all submit themselves to it, from the Pope himself downwards. And of course that it should be somewhat humbling to human pride is only what is quite natural in its acknowledged character as a medicine for sin; and what sick man ever quarrels with medicine on account of its being a little bitter to the taste?

Thomas. This seems satisfactory, Philip, as far as

it goes; but it hardly explains to me the real point of my question, which has for its object that I may know what is the true ground of the peace of mind that you Roman Catholics say you find in the practice of confession.

Philip. The true and real ground of this peace and tranquillity of mind is, of course, the Divine absolution from the guilt of sin, and from the dread of the eternal death with which Divine justice has threatened to punish all the grievous transgressions of the law of God that are committed after baptism. St. Paul, Thomas, tells us that the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, may be understood from those things which we are now able to see (Rom. i.). Now we have very often occasion to tremble to observe human law taking effect upon the criminals who are brought before it, and who are afterwards judged and executed by it. If, then, the Roman poet could say with truth of mere human justice,

“Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede pœna claudo”

(Hor. iii. *Od.* 2. 31),*

those who know themselves to be the transgressors of the Divine law, Thomas, may very rationally ask themselves the question, how they intend to escape the execution of the Divine justice upon themselves. You will say, They must repent, and betake themselves to implore the pardon of an offended God; and earnestly, and with tears, beseech Him to pardon them.

* “And punishment, though lame
Of foot, has rarely failed to smite
The knave, how swift soe’er his flight.”

Martin’s translation.

Very true, Thomas; this is precisely what they must do; only in order that human infirmity might be most marvellously and graciously assisted in doing this most necessary work, Jesus Christ has instituted the tribunal of penance as a most merciful help to enable men to obtain their pardon. For you will observe, Thomas, that however open it is to all men to shed tears of sorrow for their sins, and to strive to reconcile themselves to God in the best way they can, without the intervention of any sacrament (in doing which, we most devoutly hope that many sincerely penitent souls may succeed), still, nothing that a man can by any possibility do for himself merely by his own unaided sorrow bears any comparison with that which he would be able to do for himself, were his sorrow aided and sustained by the supernatural grace of the Sacrament, afterwards to be still further fortified by the absolving power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. For here Jesus Christ Himself, acting through the minister of the Sacrament, absolves the penitent who is duly sorry, who purposes amendment, and is prepared to render the satisfaction that may be required from him; and what peace of mind, Thomas, can possibly equal that which is the fruit of the absolution which the future Divine Judge of men will hereafter recognise as His own act?

Thomas. You are quite right, Philip. There can plainly be no such peace of mind to be obtained in any other manner; but still I cannot help seeing that it requires an unclouded belief that the Sacrament is really instituted by Jesus Christ, to be able to enjoy it. You must pray for me more and more, Philip, that I may come to this faith; for I own how beautiful it is.

Philip. Our afternoon, Thomas, has been certainly fully employed ; but still, I hope, to some good purpose. Before we part, however, there is one point to which I ought to draw your attention, as I think it throws no slight confirmation in its own way upon the doctrine of the institution of the Sacraments coming from God.

You are aware, Thomas, that it is the universal plea of those who, in Luther's time and since, have broken off from the communion of the Church of Rome, that they have been forced to seek, in separation, the freedom for a perfect conformity with the Holy Scriptures, which they complained was fraudulently and unjustly denied to them under the rule of the Church of Rome. Now, Thomas, the Scripture most plainly and distinctly enjoins, "Is any one sick among you? Let him send for the presbyters of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him, with oil in the name of the Lord." This, Thomas, is the Roman Catholic Sacrament of Extreme Unction, to which the power of curing the sick and of restoring bodily health is annexed, if God see fit, in addition to the remission of sin ; as St. James continues : "The prayer of faith shall save the sick man ; and the Lord shall lighten his sickness ; and if he be in sins, they shall be remitted him" (James v. 15). Yet the fact that not one of those, whose alleged motive for breaking off from the communion of the Church of Rome was that they might enjoy perfect freedom to become entirely scriptural, ever thinks of obeying this plain and obvious Scripture command, is as remarkable as it appears to me that there is a significant explanation to be given of it. The Scripture,

in imposing the command to anoint the sick man with oil, also gives the promise that the Lord shall lighten his sickness. Now this, you will easily perceive, Thomas, is one of the tangible results of a religious ceremony, about which there can be no danger of any mistake. And accordingly the Church of Rome has never had the least anxiety about enduring the test, which the experience of every day only more and more abundantly justifies. For nothing is commoner than for medical men, who know nothing of the Sacrament or of its promised effects, continually to express their surprise at witnessing their Roman Catholic patients unaccountably recover after the visit of the Roman Catholic priest to them. But it must be owned that nothing could be expected with greater reason than that duty to the Scriptures would have dictated to those who profess to build their whole religion upon the Scriptures, the sacred obligation of complying with a precept that is so plainly laid down for them in the Scripture, as that of anointing the sick with oil. However, in this case, it is to be observed that compliance with the precept would bring them to meet the Church of Rome upon a ground where it would be open to all men to see to whose anointing with oil the power of relieving sickness was attached; and it would, in consequence, seem to have been deemed the least of two evils by every separatist leader, that they should, one and all, escape from the inconvenient necessity of being expected to work miraculous cures, by altogether neglecting to obey the perfectly plain Scripture command prescribing the practice of anointing the sick with oil.

Thomas. It seems indeed, Philip, as if you had

given the true explanation; for as the practice of anointing with oil is in every respect as much an intelligible and reasonable a ceremony as that of baptising with water, if both are equally enjoined in the Scripture, their compliance with the one precept, and their total neglect of the other, remains quite inexplicable—if you are not to be understood to have given the right key to the comprehending where the mystery lies. However, Philip, I have great reason to be indebted to you for your plain and intelligible account of the Divine institution of the Sacraments, on which I assure you I shall reflect with all the care and attention that I can command; and I hope you will be able to come and sit with me to-morrow, that, with the help of God, we may now seriously endeavour to bring our inquiry to as speedy a termination as possible.

[PHILIP promises to come, and they part.

DIALOGUE TENTH.

PURGATORY, AND PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

SCENE: *A summer-house in MR. GOODMAN'S garden. PHILIP and THOMAS seated in view of the lawn.*

PHILIP acknowledges that his ignorance of the Canon-law disables him from speaking, as he would have wished to do, upon the subject of the general government of the Church by the Pope and the College of Cardinals; and then he proceeds to show to THOMAS in what way the Christian revelation of a Heaven, a Hell, and a Purgatory, is alone able to solve for the reason of men the mystery of their being. Explaining his subject more in detail, PHILIP shows to THOMAS that Purgatory, besides being a doctrine of the sacred Scriptures, is also witnessed by the universal tradition of all the nations of the world, and that, as a truth of reason, it is the sole possible vindication of the justice and mercy of God. In conclusion, he explains to THOMAS that the only true Christian comfort for the surviving mourners is to be found in the doctrine of prayers and alms-deeds for the departed.

Thomas. All that you said to me, Philip, yesterday, on the question of the Divine institution of the seven Sacraments, I carefully treasure up in my thoughts, with the settled purpose of honestly and seriously reflecting upon it; for as you have very justly told me, if these Sacraments are of Divine institution, God offers them to me fully as freely as to any one else, and therefore why should I be my own enemy, in so perverse and wrong-headed a manner, as to refuse to accept the gracious gifts of God, solely because they are freely offered to me in common with every other human being? For I must own that I

certainly think I should have been among the first to make a loud outcry against the favouritism and partiality of God, if you had told me, for instance, that God had instituted these Sacraments for some privileged classes, and that He had specially excluded me from the right of approach to them. However, Philip, the increasing interest which all that you have said keeps, from day to day, awakening in my mind, makes me now really anxious to press forward the termination of our inquiry, when, with the help of God, I must try to show you that, in spite of my apparent incredulity, you have not been altogether wasting your time in attempting to bring a seed to shoot up, which never had any germ of life in it at all.

Philip. What you say, Thomas, gives me not a little bright and cheerful hope as regards the happy issue of the work we have undertaken. Nay, I could almost fancy that you must have had the text of the Scripture in your mind, which says, "He that shall find Me shall find life, and shall drink-in salvation from the Lord; but he that shall stumble against Me shall hurt his own soul; for all that hate Me, love death" (Prov. viii. 35). For those who refuse to approach the Sacraments which God has provided for them, Thomas, what in the nature of things can they hope to gain by their refusal, except only to exclude themselves from their share as children in the riches of their common father's house? For Divine wisdom cries to them, as well as to others, "If any one is helpless, let him come to Me" (Prov. ix. 4). And what, pray, is the purpose for which Divine wisdom invites men to come? The Scripture goes on to say: "That I may enrich those that love Me, and that I

may fill their treasures" (Prov. viii. 21); and our Lord complains of men: "Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40). However, Thomas, we will proceed, as you desire, to our afternoon's work.

Thomas. By all means, Philip; what is the subject which you propose to choose for me?

Philip. The subject which I should myself have liked exceedingly, and which would certainly have followed in the most natural order, Thomas, after that of the divine institution of the Sacraments, is the government of the Universal Church in the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff, surrounded by his College of Cardinals, by which the administration of the Sacraments is provided for over the entire world. This would have embraced the canon-law and the whole system of jurisprudence, on which all diocesan authority is founded, and the various episcopal sees in communion with the Apostolic See of St. Peter are erected among the different nations. Only, upon coming to reflect on the amount of information which this subject would have required, to confess the honest truth, you would have infallibly discovered that, in attempting to go beyond the broad and patent facts which are in general tolerably well known, your guide himself would have been taken out of his own depth. The case with Roman Catholics, as regards the constitution of their Church, seems to be very much the same as with the present citizens of the British Empire. Living under its laws in perfect confidence and peace, as we do, we are in the habit of taking their existence for granted; and exactly in the same way as, ordinarily speaking, any true Briton, however ready he may be

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to maintain against the whole world that the British Constitution is the very perfection of a political system, never, on this account, considers himself in the least degree bound to know any thing, either more profoundly or more in detail, respecting the actual Constitution itself, than what he finds, as it were, floating in the air around him,—so in a very similar manner, we Roman Catholics also are very generally disposed entirely to take for granted the vast framework of our Church-government, and the noble system of Divine order and jurisprudence by which the Sacraments are administered, Christian doctrine is taught, and the rights of every Christian are guaranteed and protected throughout all the countries of the world.

Thomas. I think, Philip, I am very much inclined to regret our not being able to enter upon the examination of so grand a subject; for taking into account the immense fabric of churches and institutions with which the Roman Catholic Church has covered the various countries of the entire world, I should dearly like to have learned this afternoon something more in detail respecting the nature of the government and the system of law under which such an enormous work all proceeds. For you know, Philip, even as citizens of the British Empire, we perfectly understand the truth, that the one thing which distinguishes the civilised man from the savage is the presence of the public law justly administered, before which the rights of the humblest and most insignificant of the whole community are as safe, and enjoy as secure a protection, as the rights of the richest and the most powerful.

Philip. This, as you say, is no doubt a truly noble principle of British law, and one that, so long as it is faithfully preserved, will, humanly speaking, continue to oppose itself as a powerful bulwark against the dissolution to which every thing that is merely human tends. Nevertheless, you could scarcely suppose, Thomas, that so noble a principle has really come from any merely human source. It is nothing more than the *sum cuique*, or the *unius cujusque jus*,—"the right of every man,"—of the Roman canon-law ; and it is one of the celebrated Roman Pontiffs, St. Gregory VII., the Pope Hildebrand of famous memory, who says, that it is the office of St. Peter in the world to protect every man in the possession of his rights. However, if I happen not to be enough of a canon-lawyer to venture to offer you my guidance upon so interesting a topic, at least you see before you a very inviting field of inquiry for some future occasion, if the time should ever present itself, when you would like to pursue it.

Thomas. Then, if we are to pass over the subject of the canon-law, and the government of the Church by the Sovereign Pontiff and the College of the Cardinals, what question of doctrine, Philip, do you propose to take in its place ?

Philip. The particular subject which I now propose to select for you is the doctrine of purgatory, and of prayers and alms-deeds for the departed ; but you will naturally see more to admire in the truth and beauty of the details of the doctrine, if we first study in what way it forms a part of the general satisfaction which the Christian revelation gives to the reason of men on the question of the great mystery of their

being, viz. what destinies they are created for; and whither the stream of time, which it is out of the power of any man to arrest, is actually carrying them.

Thomas. You are undoubtedly right, Philip, in calling this the great mystery of our being; and how deeply it may and does affect men, when either circumstances force them, or their own thoughts lead them, to think of it, has been shown I think by no writer so powerfully as in the often-quoted lines of Shakespeare, in *Measure for Measure*;

“ Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod.
. To be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and uncertain thoughts
Imagine howling! ’Tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.”

(Act iii. scene 1.)

Philip. Shakespeare, I think, Thomas, perfectly describes the true reason why all men have so profound a reluctance to give any room in their thoughts to the contemplation of death. “’Tis too horrible!” And, as I shall presently show you, without the merciful interposition of the doctrine of an intermediate place of temporary detention, it is not in human nature to be able to bear the steady fixing of the mind upon the thought of either heaven or hell. Indeed, it is for the most part only under the diligent pressure of those who are themselves interested, that men can be brought to think even of arranging for the disposition

of their property after their death ;—for those who have wills to make are almost always found to set about making them reluctantly, with a secret sorrow for the memento it gives them of the shortness of their tenure of life ;—but apart from the doctrine of purgatory, Thomas, it is literally next to impossible for any man seriously to think what is to become of his soul after his death. “ ’Tis,” as Shakespeare justly says, “ too horrible !”

Thomas. If I had not begun, Philip, to place a little faith in your power to make good what you advance, I should almost be inclined to think that you were now wantonly making some scarcely justifiable attempt to mock and delude me with a paradox ; so you must accept it as a proof of the very real respect to which you have acquired a title, that I do not loudly cry out against you for what you are saying.

Philip. What I am saying, Thomas, I shall presently show you to be nothing but strictly and entirely the truth. Let us, however, first see what the doctrine which we have to examine really is, in its grand and sublime general aspect. The Church of Rome, then, teaches us that the company which Jesus Christ has gathered to Himself through the Sacrament of Baptism exists in three different conditions : (1) the Church militant, the members of which are now in the present visible world ; (2) the Church in purgatory, the members of which are undergoing a state of temporary purgation preparatory to their admission to their final beatitude ; and (3) the Church triumphant, or the company of those who have secured their salvation, and who are now in the enjoyment of their beatitude in the presence of their

King. And one of the invariable consequences of the denial of the doctrine of purgatory, which is the intermediate state, is that the two extremes of heaven and hell become practically forgotten, and disappear from the grasp of all the common run of men ; and the reason of this is, that heaven, when deprived of its natural intermediate approach, becomes too exalted a thought for the multitude, which "does not ascend the mountain ;" while, on the other hand, hell, with its eternity of punishment presented nakedly to the mind overpowers all ordinary faculties, being, as the great dramatist says, "*too horrible*." Hence, then, we say, Thomas, that a merciful God can never have placed the flesh and blood which He has created between two such sole alternatives as heaven or hell ; the one so exalted as to tempt all timid souls to despair, and the other so alarming as that the mind recoils from even the thought of it with unspeakable dread and horror. Thus you may plainly see that the intermediate state of a purgatory is what the feebleness of human nature claims at the hands of the love and mercy of God.

Thomas. The light in which you now put the doctrine of a purgatory, Philip, as I need scarcely say, is quite new to me ; but I confess I am strongly disposed to acknowledge that it may not be without its portion of real truth. However, before we pursue the line of thought you have commenced, I should first like to be satisfied as to the positive authority on which this doctrine of a purgatory rests.

Philip. The Council of Trent, Thomas, is the authority to which Catholics appeal, and it lays down the doctrine of a purgatory in the following words :

“ Whereas the Catholic Church, directed by the Holy Ghost, has constantly taught, out of the sacred Scriptures and the ancient traditions of the fathers, in her sacred councils, and recently in this Œcumenical Synod, that there is a purgatory; and that the souls who are detained there are assisted by the prayers of the faithful, and particularly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; this holy Synod commands all bishops diligently to study that the sound doctrine concerning purgatory, handed down from the holy fathers and the sacred councils, be believed by the Christian people, and be held, taught, and every where preached. Let all the more difficult and subtle questions, which lead to no edification, and from which no increase of piety is likely to accrue, be excluded from the sermons to the people; and let the bishops not permit any thing to be published or publicly discoursed, which is either uncertain, or which wears the appearance of falsehood; and every thing that savours of a certain curiosity or superstition, or which tends to filthy lucre, let them strictly prohibit as a scandal and an offence to the faithful” (sess. xxv.).

Thomas. I perceive, Philip, from the language of the Council, that a direct appeal is made to the sacred Scriptures, as containing the doctrine of a purgatory; to what particular portions of the Scripture, then, should you be disposed principally to refer, if you were asked to mention what especial scriptural arguments seemed most conclusive to your mind on the subject of this doctrine?

Philip. The particular argument that has always appeared most conclusive to my mind is found in our

Lord's words, where He says, "He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the future world" (Matt. xii. 32). Here, as you will easily see, it plainly appears that sin is remitted in the future world as well as in the present; for the sin against the Holy Ghost is expressly declared to be an exception to the general rule of the remissibility of sin in both worlds. Now in Heaven itself, Thomas, there can plainly be no remission of sin; "for into heaven," according to St. John, "nothing enters that defileth" (Apoc. xxi. 27); and hell is the place of endless punishment. Consequently nothing remains but that in the future world, of which our Lord speaks, there should be a third and intermediate place, neither heaven nor hell, but simply the purgatory of our belief, where sin, in respect of the temporal penalty due to it, can be and is remitted. However, I say this more to give you an idea of the light and off-hand way in which adversaries are ready to assert that the doctrine of purgatory is not found in the Scriptures, than as professing to enter into the question of the whole argument from the Scriptures; for this would occupy our time too long and carry us too far.

Thomas. The argument is so new to me, Philip, and appears so just, that I could almost wish you would enter further into the statement of the proofs of the doctrine from the Scriptures.

Philip. It is not at all necessary, Thomas; for there is nothing that the adversaries of purgatory are more continually doing themselves than betraying, in a great variety of ways, their own want of belief in the truth of their opposition to the doctrine. For

example: none are such admirers of the poetry of Dante as those who profess to say purgatory is a false doctrine, and yet one entire third part of Dante's immortal work of the *Divina Commedia* is his poetical description of this very purgatory, in which Virgil, the poet of the Augustan era, is represented as acting as his guide. Now if the doctrine of a purgatory were the frightful falsehood which their opposition, if it could be supposed genuine, would pronounce it to be, their love and admiration for Dante, and their continual attempts at new translations of his poem, would make them not less than accomplices in the propagation and circulation of a lie;—a judgment which is much too rigorous, when it is so far more humane and merciful to say that their opposition is only artificial, and not really genuine. And besides, Thomas, a purgatory is the tradition of all the people of the whole earth.

Thomas. What is your proof of this, Philip?

Philip. You well remember, no doubt, amongst many other passages with which the classic poets abound, the remarkable lines of Virgil:

“Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expendunt. Aliæ panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exurit igni;

* * * * *

Donec longa dies, perfecto temporis orbe,
Concretam exemit labem purumque reliquit
Ætherium sensum, atque aurai simplicis ignem”
(*Æneid*, vi. 739).*

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- * “Therefore, in discipline of torments these
Due penance pay for all their crimes forepast;
Some hang expanded to the viewless winds;
From others, deep in a vast gulf, is purged

You see, Thomas, here is the very doctrine of the Church of Rome herself stated, almost in the language of theology, by a heathen poet, with the exception, of course, of the poetry about the action of the winds and the fire, respecting which the Council of Trent forbears to make any definition, simply describing purgatory as a place where there is a temporal penalty to be paid incurred by sins committed here.

Thomas. But will not people most reasonably reply to you, that your very citation from a heathen poet most incontestably proves that the Catholic doctrine is merely borrowed from the heathens, and therefore plainly false?

Philip. No, Thomas; such an argument has not a fraction of even apparent value, though it is one that has been brought forward more than once. People might, with just as much reason, assert the doctrine of the existence of God to have been only borrowed by the Christians from the heathens, and to be therefore plainly false, because, in common with purgatory, it is equally the tradition of all the nations of the earth. The nations of the earth, Thomas, we must never forget, are all derived from the single family of Noah, who was a priest and a prophet of God; and, by the mercy of God watching over His creatures, the vestiges of the religion and doctrines taught to them by Noah have never been so totally overlaid and obscured but that the most striking tra-

The blot of guilt, or burned by fire away,

Till the long lapse of ages due revolved
Hath sheer expunged th' inherent stain, and left
All the pure soul's ethereal consciousness."

Beresford's translation.

ditions of Divine truth frequently appear among them, and especially in the writings of their poets. You may remember a remarkable instance of this, where St. Paul, in his speech before the Areopagus at Athens, quotes the words, "For we are His children," from the poet Hesiod, in proof of the doctrine of the One God, Father of all, which he was then preaching before the Athenian senate.

Thomas. Then it now appears from what you have said, Philip, that the doctrine of a purgatory is plainly taught by the Council of Trent, as being contained in the Scriptures, and as being also the uniform tradition of the Christian society ; besides which you show me that it is a tradition equally found among all nations, and that the very adversaries of the doctrine betray the real insincerity of their opposition to it, amongst many other similar indications, by their spontaneous admiration of Dante's poem of Purgatory. Now you were, I think, going to show me, when I interrupted you, that the weakness of humanity cries to God for the gift of a purgatory, in order to soften and modify the sole alternatives of heaven and hell, as being on the one side too exalted, and on the other too terrible for human frailty. I should, then, much like you to continue what you were going to say on this score.

Philip. My great delight, Thomas, in matters of doctrine, from a very early age, has always been to endeavour to study their working in the great book of living men ;—for of erudite learning, my store, as you have already perceived, is but limited ;—and perhaps my best response to your request will be to relate to you a conversation I once heard in a rail-

way-carriage between a Roman Catholic priest and a young man, who described himself as belonging to a large manufacturing firm in one of the midland counties. "Judging from your appearance, sir," said the young man, "I think I must have the pleasure of speaking to a Roman Catholic clergyman?" "Yes, sir," returned the other; "I have the honour, unworthily, to be a Roman Catholic priest." "I am happy to have the opportunity of speaking to one of your profession, sir," returned the young man; "for I have for some time past had a great desire to know more of the Roman Catholic religion, and, indeed, have had serious thoughts more than once of joining your communion." "I am very happy to hear you say this," returned the priest; "will you allow me to ask you what may have been your particular point of attraction?" "It's your doctrine of a purgatory that attracts me, sir," rejoined the youth. "Ah!" replied the priest, "this is not a little remarkable; for we generally find that the prejudices of education are almost more decidedly adverse to this one doctrine than to any other. What may be the particular point of attraction in this doctrine which has gained such a hold over your mind?" "I think it so extremely reasonable," returned the other. "For you know, sir, if I were going to die this moment, I could never possibly expect Almighty God to admit me into heaven, and I should certainly not like to think that He would send me to hell; and so, unless there be a purgatory, what could He do with me?" Now I conceive, Thomas, that this is the only possible reasoning for all men of sound understandings, if they bring themselves to look

the reality of death fairly in the face, in the plain practical way in which the young man looked at it, whose words you have just heard. And my firm conviction, Thomas, is, that the sole cause why this reasoning is not much more common, you will find to be no other than the one which I have suggested, viz. that, deprived of the protection of the mercy of a purgatory, human nature, as found in the multitude, cannot bear to grapple with the reality of either heaven or hell. The one thought is too exalted, and the other is, as Shakespeare justly says, too horrible. Hence, Thomas, the multitude of men, where the doctrine of purgatory is not taught, as every day's experience shows, cannot endure the thought of death; and, in consequence, do not prepare for it in any other manner than that in which the Indian prepares to be carried down the Falls of Niagara, who, when he finds that the current has gained the mastery over him, just quietly lies down in the bottom of his canoe, and refuses to allow his mind to think of the fate that he cannot avoid. This is really, Thomas, an exact image of the way in which the multitude will always be observed to resign themselves to meet death, when they are not assisted by the merciful protection of the doctrine of an intermediate state between heaven and hell.

Thomas. You speak, Philip, I must confess, like a man who understands what he is talking about; and if this is what you have gained by your faith in the doctrine of a purgatory, I cannot but bear testimony to the power which it appears to give you to speak practically of that the very mention of which has so much terror for the generality of men.

Philip. Thomas, the power which strikes your attention is no doubt to a certain extent a token of the doctrine itself coming from God ; but no display of mere power, it must also be observed, is at all in itself calculated to win the heart of man. Jesus Christ has gained out of the earth the company which believes His doctrines by the love which He exhibited in dying upon the cross to pay the price of our redemption, by His meekness and His mercy for the frailties and weaknesses of men ; and I cannot but think that, if you have not failed to be struck by the power which the firm belief in the doctrine of a purgatory gives to men to bear the thought of the future which awaits them, you will be far more wonderfully attracted by its mercifulness, as a rich and unfailing source of comfort to dry up the tears of the disconsolate and heart-stricken mourners, who weep for the loss of dear friends and relatives, whom they will never see again in this world.

Thomas. Explain this to me, Philip, and I shall listen to you with the greatest willingness ; for I have known, as a widower, what the grief of a separation from a beloved wife has been ; and I do not know any one who has ever suggested to me a single thing from which I have experienced any real or genuine consolation.

Philip. What you say, Thomas, of your own case is only the experience of thousands and tens of thousands besides yourself. For I am sure you must have remarked the almost countless instances of those who are full of all the fine and beautiful feelings of human attachment, and who are even remarkable for exhibiting the warmest and most affectionate

interest in their friends ; and yet all this is built on a heartless condition, tacitly underlying the whole fabric, that their friends are not to do any thing so *malapropos* and so inopportune as to die. When death in these cases does unexpectedly come, however for the moment nature may claim its empire, in order to give free and unrestrained current to tears and lamentations, yet the imperious world soon returns to say : “ I cannot permit you to be dejected and disconsolate to no purpose. You must forget the person who ought not to have died ; and why should you afflict and injure yourself by vain and fruitless efforts to remember one whom all your remembering can make neither better nor worse off ? For if he or she is gone to heaven, your remembrance cannot be wanted ; and if to hell, your remembrance cannot avail. Forget, therefore, what has happened, as quickly as you can,—seeing that nothing you can do can be of the least use to the friend whom you have lost,—and resume your cheerfulness.”

Thomas. You certainly speak the truth, Philip. This is exactly the way in which my family have always tried to console me for the death of my poor wife. For when I used to complain how much I missed her familiar voice and presence in my house, and to describe to them, in my grief, how lonely and desolate I felt myself to have become, my friends then did but recommend me to turn my attention more to gardening and to the improvement of my grounds, and to seek for diversion by visiting my acquaintances ; which of course, in effect, amounted to what you say, that there was no use in remem-

bering one whom all my remembering could not benefit, while it would certainly endanger the ruin of my own health and spirits.

Philip. Here then, Thomas, you have a clear view before you of the merciless cruelty over all the nobler and better feelings of humanity which the denial of the doctrine of purgatory exercises. The afflicted widower is not suffered piously to remember the soul of his departed wife, and the still more helpless widow is forbidden so much as to solace her own grief by praying for the soul of her departed husband. Such, Thomas, is the ruthless tyranny of unbelief, and such is its merciless dealing with the bleeding hearts and affections of men; as the Scripture truly says, "the tender mercies of the evil are cruel" (Prov. xii. 10). What can be more deadening to humanity, and calculated to drive men to be hopelessly worldly-minded, than to force them to look on death as a total present separation between the afflicted survivor and the beloved departed? Be assured, Thomas, that so cold and heartless a doctrine as this is not the doctrine of the Church, where the merciful Jesus is represented by the living Vicegerent of His mercies. The Christian religion, it is quite true, has not been sent to repeal the affliction of death, and Roman Catholic families are liable to this visitation of sorrow equally with all others. The words of the Roman poet in this respect are just as true now as they ever were, that

"Non vanæ redeat sanguis imāgini
Quam virgā semel horridā,
Non lenis precibus fata recludere
Nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi."*

- * "Yet never, never can thy art avail
To bring life's glowing tide back to the phantom pale;

But how different, Thomas, is the sequel of death to the children of the true Holy Mother of the souls of men! The denier of purgatory has no other consolation to give to the tears of the mourner than what the Roman poet could say equally well :

“Durum ! sed levius fit patientiâ
Quidquid corrigere est nefas”

(Hor. i. *Od.* 24).

“Tis hard ; but patience lessens the grief it cannot cure.” Death, such is the dismal cry which unbelief utters, has put the departed one entirely beyond your reach ; therefore, forget one whom to remember is only a fruitless weariness of the flesh. No, says the true Christian doctrine to the Christian mourner ; the words of this unbelief are not true, and piously to remember the departed one is by no means a fruitless weariness. You have the consoling warrant of the Church for knowing that death has not separated you, but has only established a new and a different relation between you. It is now yours to pray, to do alms-deeds, and to obtain that the Holy Sacrifice be offered ; and you will thus wonderfully alleviate and benefit the condition of the beloved one whom you mourn. And besides this, in the very offering your prayers, your own grief will obtain a sweet balm of heavenly comfort ; in doing your alms-deeds, the poor of Jesus Christ will find their sufferings alleviated, and they will add their prayers

Whom, with his black inexorable wand,
Hermes, austere and pitiless as fate,
Hath forced to join the dark and spectral band
In their sad journey to the Stygian gate.”
Martin's translation.

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to yours and will bless you ; and in causing Masses to be celebrated, you will advance the honour of Jesus Christ, and the glory of His Church.

Thomas. I cannot but acknowledge, Philip, that your doctrine of a purgatory appears to me incomparably more Christian and consoling than any thing I ever heard before in all my life. It is certainly worthy of a Divine religion that is merciful to men, to restore the intercommunion between the dead and the living, which death, according to the order of nature, snaps asunder. I plainly see, Philip, that nothing but a Divine religion could by any possibility accomplish this ; and I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the Roman Catholic religion is the only religion that really succeeds in bringing her people to entertain the thought of death not being a total separation for the remainder of life to the afflicted survivor. I own how deeply such a doctrine speaks to the heart of men, and this itself is no slight witness of its coming from God.

Philip. How deeply, Thomas, the doctrine which teaches the survivors to pray for their departed friends responds to the irrepressible feelings and wants of the human soul, is proved, I think, by nothing so much as by the simple fact, that no amount of artificial denial, and no external prohibitions of prayers for the dead, can extinguish the voice which speaks more loudly for them in the inmost heart of men, than it is in the power of any forged and fabricated fetters to repress. I have myself known more than one pious and afflicted widowed lady carried away by the power of her Christian feelings to make light of the doctrines of her sect, by flying to continual prayers and alms-

deeds for the soul of her departed husband, in order to seek this natural vent for her own grief. And yet, Thomas, what value could such prayers possibly have possessed in any rational person's mind, if the doctrine of a purgatory had not been inwardly felt to be a truth that came from God to an extent that it is simply not in the power of any merely human systems to efface?

Thomas. I have no wish to resist what you say; on the contrary I willingly yield myself to your guidance, Philip, and only desire now that we may put the finishing stroke to our work as soon as possible.

Philip. My aim, Thomas, as you will no doubt have perceived, has not been higher than to reconcile your heart and understanding to the truth and mercy of the doctrine of a purgatory, and it will be for you later on to study any particular questions of theology connected with the doctrine, that you may desire to understand.* In the mean time, I hope another afternoon will enable you to terminate your inquiry quite sufficiently for your purpose; for I have now but one more subject that I wish to speak about, which is the glory of Jesus Christ in heaven; and the intercession, aid, and other benefits that we derive in the present life from the glorious Queen and Virgin Mother of Jesus, the Immaculate Mary, together with all the blessed Saints who stand round the throne of our King.

Thomas. This promises to be a noble subject, Philip; and I hope I may expect you to-morrow without fail, towards the same hour.

[Philip promises to come, and they part.]

* The reader may with the same view consult the Appendix to Dialogue Tenth.

DIALOGUE ELEVENTH.

THE COMMUNION OF THE SAINTS; OR THE PATRONAGE AND INTERCESSION OF MARY THE BLESSED VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD, AND OF THE SAINTS IN GLORY SURROUNDING THE THRONE OF JESUS CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS.

SCENE : MR. THOMAS GOODMAN'S parlour ; PHILIP and THOMAS are seated together.

PHILIP explains to THOMAS that the Christian religion could have no pretension to claim the assent of the reason of men if it did not bring to them the doctrine that the King whom it preaches, as now sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Eternal Father, is also surrounded by a glorious company of the saints of His kingdom, to whom a power of direct help and patronage in behalf of their fellow-servants upon earth is granted, whose examples are our models of Christian virtue, whose power of present protection is a source of Christian courage, and the hope and prospect of whose glorious companionship in the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ is an incentive to holy perseverance.

Thomas. I have been looking out, Philip, with not a little eagerness for your coming, and I can hardly tell you how glad I am now to see you. A new world seems to open before me, and since our conversation of yesterday I have even made an attempt to pray for my poor wife ; so you may perceive that your patience has not been entirely without its fruits ; and I am now all readiness to hear you open the grand and sublime subject which you have promised me.

Philip. It is indeed a grand and sublime subject, Thomas, and you must pardon me the inability under which I shall labour of being unable to speak of it in a worthy manner; however, as our object is but a very plain and simple one, viz. to seek for such a line of thought only as will tend to lead you to faith, and perhaps help to confirm me in my own, I need not make any parade of my humility. Our present subject, then, as you will easily see, joins itself on in the most natural order and connexion to the one of yesterday. For we then arrived in full view of the truth, that it was the touchstone of a religion being Divine, and the test of its coming from God, that it should be able to say to death, "*Where is thy victory?*" (1 Cor. xv. 55); in other words, that it should have the power in the present world of knitting together, by means of its own new ties that are superior to death, those whom death has separated from each other's society; and we then saw how the Roman Catholic religion is able to effect this through the doctrine, and the practice founded upon it, of the prayers and alms-deeds of the surviving mourners in behalf of their departed friends. So to-day we do but pursue the same subject, in examining further into the nature of the victory which Jesus Christ has gained over death, by establishing the relation of patron and client between us, who are upon earth, and the company of His saints in glory, who stand round about His throne; peerless above all whom is the Immaculate Virgin Mother of the King Himself, the Blessed Mary, who stood by His cross, and who saw Him die, but who now, in the glory of heaven, calls Him her Son whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.

Thomas. Proceed, Philip ; for I am all eagerness to listen to you.

Philip. The Apostles' Creed, then, Thomas, declares to us that Jesus Christ is now ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. The expressions "to sit," and "at the right hand," are, as Cardinal Bellarmine writes, figurative. The first signifying the royal and judicial authority, to whom it alone appertains to sit when all else stand ; and the "right hand of God" signifying the equal glory which Jesus Christ, Very God and Very Man, has with the Eternal Father. Now it is not at all according to the nature of royalty to sit in a forlorn solitude ; and just as it is the glory of the domestic household that the "children should be found as the young branches of the olive round about the table" (Ps. cxxvii.), so, according to the universal sense of all men, it is the glory of the king to be able to surround his throne with the noblemen and noble ladies of his kingdom. Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, Thomas, sitting in royal dignity, as true Man, at the right hand of the Eternal Father, could not, as true Man, be possibly understood to sit merely by Himself, after the fashion of the deserted and neglected king of a tragedy ; but the truth of His humanity requires that He should sit surrounded with His own becoming and appropriate court. Nevertheless, however appropriately the hierarchy of the holy angels, as being pure spirits, would surround the throne of Jesus Christ as God, the holy angels cannot be looked upon as the sole appropriate court of the King, who sits not only as God, but also as Man, at the right hand of the Eternal Father. The appropriate

court, therefore, of Jesus Christ, sitting as Man, will consequently have to be formed out of those who, being themselves men, have been redeemed by their King, who became Man for their redemption. And thus you see, Thomas, the company of the saints in glory round the throne of Jesus Christ follows as the necessary and inevitable consequence of the ascension of Jesus Christ to sit in royal majesty as Man at the right hand of the Eternal Father.

Thomas. I like what you say, Philip, extremely. Shakespeare, in his characters of King Lear and Cordelia, I think, undoubtedly shows us that mere royalty left alone by itself is nothing but an object of universal commiseration, and that then it is looked upon by all men only in the light of a most real tragedy. If, therefore, Jesus Christ were to be known to us solely and exclusively as a royal person denuded of the glory and dignity of an appropriate court surrounding His throne, it appears to me that in this case there would be associated with His name nothing but the idea of a tragedy, which would as infinitely surpass that of King Lear, as it is the nature of heavenly things to surpass the things of earth; for we should then know nothing of Him but of His sufferings, while all that betokened His glory and triumph would be entirely kept out of our sight.

Philip. These ideas of yours, Thomas, appear to me perfectly just. We have learned to know our Lord's love for men, His meekness, and compassion for our failings, by His voluntary humiliation, and His sacrifice of Himself upon the cross for our redemption; and if we could not have thus learned to know Him, the thought of His power and majesty would

but have frightened us away from Him ; as St. Peter shows us where he said to our Lord, on first seeing a display of His miraculous power, " Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord " (Luke v. 8). On the other hand, Thomas, it is only a true and veritable Power and Majesty that rules sovereignly over men, whether in ordinary worldly politics or in religion ; so that wherever Jesus Christ is preached to men solely as the hero of the sublime tragedy accomplished on Mount Calvary, the poor and the miserable only, who are sick and weary of this world, will be likely to be attracted to Him.

Hence the universal voice of all humanity, of the high as well as the low, asks for the doctrine of the glorious company of the saints, who surround the throne of their glorified King, as the necessary sequel to the shame and humiliation of the death on the cross. And thus the Communion of the saints, besides being an article of the Apostles' Creed, is also a truth of the general reason of all men.

Thomas. I entirely agree with what you say, Philip ; and I cannot see the shadow of a reason why this doctrine of the Communion of the saints should in any way fail to be received with universal favour ; for nothing appears to me more truly acceptable, and in all respects more consonant with right reason.

Philip. All classes of Christians, Thomas, as you surmise with great justice, appear to be able to receive the doctrine of the Communion of the saints with the unqualified favour which you suppose as, in truth, the natural sequel of honour and glory following properly, according to St. Paul's words (Phil. ii. 9), the humiliation of the cross, and as

being nothing but what the Christian religion plainly appears to require ; only they append a condition to the doctrine which must for ever place an impassable gulf between themselves and the Church of Rome.

Thomas. What is this condition, Philip ? for I am very curious to know.

Philip. Their recognition of the company of the saints in glory requires the condition that the saints shall be satisfied with the limits of their own heaven. It insists on reducing the saints to be no more than what the Epicurean philosophy shocked even the natural piety of heathenism by saying of the gods and heroes of their mythology,—

“ Omnis enim per se Divûm natura necesse est
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
Semota a nostris rebus sejunctaque longe”
(*Lucretius*, lib. i. 57) ;*—

that they were not in any way to interfere with the concerns of men in the present world. Now this, Thomas, is directly subversive of the Roman Catholic doctrine and belief, which teaches us to see, in the saints who surround the throne of our glorified King, our own best friends and benefactors, through whom we who are their clients on earth receive such great and excellent benefits, that if the saints, who are our patrons, were to be really confined to their own heaven, this would cause us to incur the greatest possible loss and deprivation.

Thomas. When you speak, Philip, of the saints

* “ For whatsoe'er's Divine must live in peace,
In undisturbed and everlasting ease,
Nor care for us ; from fears and dangers free,
Sufficient to its own felicity.”

Creech's translation.

who are in the glory of heaven being our patrons and benefactors, you naturally broach a very acceptable notion ; for nobody, unless his mind has received a very perverse twist indeed, ever quarrels with the idea of a benefactor. However, I suppose what will be required from you will be reliable evidence of the power of these patrons to benefit their clients.

Philip. Unquestionably, Thomas, such evidence must be produced. However, let us first cast a glance at the reason of what we are saying. You have, then, very justly remarked, that such forlorn and denuded royalty as that of King Lear and Cordelia conveys to the multitude of men nothing but the idea of a tragedy, and that royalty on these terms is only an object of general commiseration ; so that before it can become what it ought to be,—an object of honour and esteem,—it requires, in the natural order of things, to be surrounded by the appropriate glories of the royal court. But to what good purpose, Thomas, are the king's courtiers to be thus preferred and exalted, except that they may set an example to those beneath them of the virtues becoming the subjects of the kingdom, and be further able to endear the dignity they have received by making themselves the channels through which numerous benefits will reach the hands of the people, to which they would not otherwise have been able to obtain access?

Thomas. All that you say, Philip, seems to me perfectly according to right reason. This is exactly our idea of the nature of a wise and beneficent sovereignty, that the persons chosen to stand around the throne of the monarch should both exemplify the virtues proper to the kingdom in their own persons,

and should show themselves the patrons and the defenders of the people below them, who form the multitude of the kingdom.

Philip. Thomas, you have exactly expressed the true idea of a kingdom, with which all people are perfectly familiar. The very terms themselves of patron and client have come down to us from the earliest times of the Roman empire, and the notion itself of such a relationship carries with it its own approval. Historians and statesmen appear always to have been loud in their praises of the old Roman institution of patron and client, as the true bond of union that bound the families of patrician dignity to the plebs or multitude of the state. The inferiors, who were the body and substance of the state, had thus always an advocate in their patron, who was not only officially charged to protect them and to plead their cause, but entitled, by his rank and position, to invoke the whole combined power of the commonwealth in their behalf, if need required; while, on the other hand, the patron's own dignity and importance grew in proportion to the multitude of the clients who were attached to him. In a word, the perfect community of interests pervading all ranks, which the institution of patron and client produced, has always justly passed for one of the chief elements of stability in the Roman power, which eventually enabled it to obtain imperial sway over the world.

Thomas. Am I to understand then, Philip, that there may be something more than an accidental identity in the use of the terms patron and client; and that men's minds may have been designedly prepared, by the example of the patrons and clients of ancient Rome, to accept the doctrine of the patronage of the

saints of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in behalf of their clients among the Christian people?

Philip. I think we should scarcely be acting wisely, Thomas, if we were to allow ourselves to be drawn off into such a digression as your question suggests; but to show you what a beautiful field of interesting inquiry it opens up, I may quote you the words of a prayer which occurs in the Roman Liturgy: "O God, " who didst prepare the Roman Empire to preach the " Gospel of the eternal King."* All things must serve Jesus Christ, Thomas; and in becoming Man, God has taken what He found in the world, and has made it serve His own ends; but to enter into the proof of this on any thing like an adequate scale would be far too great a digression from our present purpose.

Thomas. Then, Philip, if I understand you, your case is, that the saints of the kingdom of Jesus Christ are not only not confined to their own heaven, but that their patronage is a positive and tangible help and assistance, by the perfectly real and appreciable charm of which they have endeared themselves to the Christian people, in the same intelligible manner that the Roman patrician patrons rendered themselves acceptable to the plebeians of Rome. Now I like this statement, Philip, of yours exceedingly, more than I can describe; for you here descend to meet your adversaries in the arena of facts. They will say to you, no doubt, that the patronage of the saints is a highly refined and most charming idea, beautifully adapted to lyric poetry, or even the drama; but of course, as regards any tangible or perceptible benefit ever ascertained to have been received from it, it is well known to be the

* Collect for the Roman Emperor.

merest empty sound and deception. So as you now meet your adversaries, Philip, in the region of the stubborn things called facts, I may most reasonably ask you, Where in the world is your evidence of the reality of the benefits conferred through the Christian saints? for it seems to me that the whole question now turns upon what sort of evidence you can produce.

Philip. Suppose, Thomas, that we apply a test to our case taken from very humble life, and see what result it will yield. There is, as you doubtless know, a numerous class of the community, who, of all men, may be presumed to have acquired the most extensive experience of what it is to be dependent upon patronage. These are the poor vagrants, who lead a life of continual begging from door to door, never condescending to do such a thing as an honest day's work, but ever content to subsist exclusively upon what they can obtain from their patrons. Now let us suppose that the patrons on whom they are in the habit of subsisting could receive suddenly, to a man, such an infusion of the science of political economy into their minds, as that they would, from a certain date, absolutely refuse all relief to any vagrant upon any pretext whatsoever, so that the whole begging confraternity should at once see their supplies inexorably stopped. What do you think they would do, Thomas?

Thomas. I suppose, Philip, no one would have a moment's doubt as to what they would do. They must give over begging; some to get their living by honest labour, others either to turn thieves or to starve. But of course no vagrant would go on begging for begging's sake; for no one ever heard of the act of begging being its own reward.

Philip. Then, Thomas, apply the same test to the practice which you may easily see is still subsisting, after the experience of eighteen long centuries, among the Roman Catholics, as much at the present day as in former centuries, of innumerable persons constantly giving their time to the labour of imploring particular members of the glorified company of the saints for their help, and ask yourself the question, Is this long-standing practice really never at any time known to obtain so much as the least tangible benefit for those who keep adhering to it so steadfastly?

Thomas. That is exactly what I want to know, Philip. I grant you that the phenomenon you point out is a proof that the persons themselves are well satisfied; but I should like to know what are the sort of benefits which are most commonly obtained by them, and what is the nature of the evidence by which the truth and reality of the benefits received is proved.

Philip. I will give you an instance in point, Thomas. The present Pope, Pius IX., in his youth could not be admitted into the Pontifical noble guard on account of ill-health; and at the suggestion of the countess, his mother, as it is related in his Life, he went on a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin at Loretto, and came back restored to perfect health. Since then he has been raised, by Divine Providence, to the most exalted dignity on earth, in which he is an object of incessant assault from an immense multitude both of the most evil-minded and the most deluded men, while his cause suffers almost as much from the timidity of those who are professedly on his side. Now, Thomas, Pius IX. never ceases diligently to invoke the aid of the Immaculate Virgin, the Queen

Mother of the King of kings, whose Vicar he is ; and you see that this Queen is able to preserve him in peace in his own city, and he is not given over to the will of his enemies. The very mythology of the poor heathens, Thomas, in this respect rebukes the unbelief of the Christians ; for we have Virgil putting such words as these into Juno's mouth :

“ Mene incepto desistere victam,
Nec posse Italia Teucrorum avertere regem ;
* * * * *
* * et quisquam numen Junonis adoret
Præterea aut supplex aris imponet honorem ?”
(*Æneid*, lib. i. 37.)*

If the saints, Thomas, did not prove their power to confer benefits upon their clients in a manner too manifest to admit of denial, how can you account for the wonderful honour in which their names continue to be held among so many different nations ?

Thomas. I admit the force of your argument altogether, Philip, as far as it has reference to the power you attribute to the saints considered as a theory ; for if Jesus Christ is God and Man, the whole world must be subject to Him ; and all His saints, in conformity with this theory, must have all the power you attribute to them of being benefactors to men. It is only the old leaven of my doubting nature which has made me desire to know that the facts of the case properly correspond with the theory.

* “ Shall I, of my purpose foil'd,
Cease, from Italia's shore found impotent
To turn the Trojan king ? * * * * *
* * * * *
Who now shall Juno's sacred name adore ?
Who now with suppliant gifts her altars crown ?”
Beresford's translation.

Philip. If you would like, Thomas, to make your doubts serve as the pretext for a very nice summer's excursion, I should by all means advise you to take a trip to St. Winifred's Well, near Holywell, in Flintshire; and by inquiry on the spot you will find that not a season passes there without various miraculous cures taking place, such as the restoration of the eyesight to the blind, cures of lameness, and other maladies. The truth is, that there is nothing by which human life can be lawfully and honourably benefited which is excluded from the patronage and the intercession of the saints; and you may form some idea of the number and variety of the benefits conferred, by the fact that, in a single generation, the authentic record kept in the church of Canterbury of the miracles worked at the tomb of St. Thomas Beckett alone filled two folio volumes. People, Thomas, will of course now affect to treat such a record as a mere tissue of fables; but what, I would ask, do they gain by doing so, except that the lame remain and die lame, the blind live and die blind, and those who are in difficulties have to get out of them in the best way they can, without receiving the help from the saints, which indeed they never ought to expect to receive from them, so long as they go out of their way to stigmatise their very power to help as being itself merely fabulous and legendary.

Thomas. I admit, Philip, that you have answered my question in a perfectly matter-of-fact manner. You have referred me, for a sample of a saint's power to benefit those who are now living, to St. Winifred's Well, in Flintshire, as a place where the power of a particular saint is still evidenced by miracles of a

merciful nature, which you say occur every season. And of course, if it had been the common practice of the clients under the old Roman Empire to be continually turning the power of their patrons to help them into contempt and ridicule, they could hardly have complained with much justice if their patrons, in return, never exerted themselves in their behalf, and consequently did very little for them.

Philip. We must not omit to consider, however, Thomas, that patronage is not the sole office of the magnates even of a human kingdom. They are also, as we have seen, naturally looked up to, and expected to be the fitting examples of the virtues proper to its subjects; and it is the tradition of all noble and honourable kingdoms to preserve the memories of their greatmen as household words among every family. The heroes of a people consequently are never to be suffered to pass out of remembrance; for all the honour and nobility of the people lie at stake on their memory being religiously preserved in the hearts of each separate family and household. Example, in the experience of all mankind, is ever held to teach virtue more effectually than precept; and how old and familiar a truth this is, in the experience of men, is evidenced by a remarkable passage in the most beautiful Eclogue of Virgil, which the Emperor Constantine, if I remember rightly, used to regard as one of the chief Gentile prophecies of the Messias. The poet there calls upon the boy, whose birth is celebrated as the commencement of a new and more glorious era for the whole world, "to read the great deeds of his parent, and of the heroes of his race, that he might learn to know from them what virtue was."

"At simul heroum laudes et facta parentis
 Jam legere, et quæ sit poteris cognoscere virtus"
(Eclogue iv.).

Thus, Thomas, the Church of Rome, in proposing the lives and histories of the saints of Jesus Christ as the models of Christian virtue, and as the true household words for all her people, is only giving a new Christian life and vigour to an old rule of time-honoured wisdom, which has always sought to enforce the precept of virtue by the charm of virtue's living exemplification.

Thomas. I do not see, Philip, how any thing can be more rational and satisfactory than what you say. For the principle of instruction which you are here describing is plainly no other than the one which St. Paul lays down in the whole of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he passes in review a concise summary of all the heroes which the Hebrew nation had produced, and exhorts them to take all these heroes for models of the heroism proper to the Christian calling.

Philip. This catalogue of heroes from the Holy Scriptures has, since St. Paul's time, grown to the dimensions of the Calendar of the Saints of the Church of Rome. "Let all thy works, O Lord," says the Psalmist, "confess Thee, and let Thy saints bless Thee. They shall declare the glory of Thy kingdom and speak of Thy power, that they may make known Thy power to the sons of men, and the glory of the magnificence of Thy kingdom. For Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, and Thy dominion is from generation to generation" (Ps. cxliv. 10). If the saints, as appears from the above words of Scrip-

ture, are those who make known the glory of our Lord's kingdom to the sons of men, and if the kingdom itself endures from generation to generation, it is manifest, Thomas, that new saints must continually arise to show forth this glory; and then such an event as last year arrested the attention of the whole world, in the solemn declaration of the honours of sanctity to the twenty-six martyrs of Japan, by Pius IX., in the Basilica of St. Peter's, is clearly seen to belong inseparably to the truth of the kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth; which is only, in other words, to place the claim of the Church of Rome to be the kingdom of Jesus Christ beyond the reach of attack; for the Calendar of the Saints never, at any time, receives any new members except solely from the canonisation of the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church of Rome.

Thomas. All that you have said to me, Philip, is extremely striking and new, and, as far as I can venture to think myself prepared to subscribe all at once to that which is so new to me, I am in every way disposed to acknowledge its truth. I certainly now see the signs of a wonderful Divine power manifested upon earth through the saints, of which I had not even a faint notion before.

Philip. This very manifestation of Divine power upon earth, which now begins to attract your attention, Thomas, brings with it, as I think I shall be able to show you, an almost indispensable benefit to the Christian people, which we certainly ought not to overlook, as it is connected in the most intimate manner possible with the advancement and ascendancy of the cause of the Christian religion.

Thomas. I fancy, Philip, I can divine something

of your meaning ; but I should certainly like to hear you explain it fully yourself, rather than make any attempt to anticipate you.

Philip. You are aware, Thomas, as indeed no one can fail to be aware, that the Roman Catholic Church constitutes a well-known cause in the world, on which the eyes of all men rest. Its mission in human society is to rule and mould the minds of men, to undertake the education of youth, to handle and to judge of all the great social and doctrinal questions which agitate mankind ; and, in short, it forms, as we have seen during one of our conversations, a society perfect in itself, embracing the whole world, endowed with every resource, and having an unlimited command over every thing which is noble and honourable in human life. Now what can such a cause require more indispensably in the world of men than an exemplary courage in all its people, but especially in those who are called to any kind of administrative position in it ? as St. Paul says, " God has not given " us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and of " sobriety" (2 Tim. i. 7).

Thomas. Certainly, Philip, courage is indispensable for every cause ; and, unless I am mistaken, experience bears testimony to the fact, that more causes have been ruined in the world through the cowardice of their defenders than from any other single reason. You remember, no doubt, Horace's lines, describing Hannibal contemplating his approaching downfall, and attributing it entirely to the spirit of cowardice that had seized upon his troops :

"Dixitque tandem perfidus Hannibal,
Cervi luporum præda rapacium,"

Sectamur ultro quos opimus
Fallere et effugere est triumphus."
(iv. *Od.* 4.)*

Philip. You are perfectly right, Thomas; and so necessary is courage to the Christian calling, even in the case of the ordinary Christian, that God has given to His people the spirit of fortitude as one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost (Isaias xi. 2). And the aggravated character of the vice of cowardice among the Christian people is made to appear in the most striking manner from a passage in the Apocalypse, where the first in the list of those "who have their part in the lake of fire and sulphur, which is the "second death," and classed there on a par with the murderers and fornicators, stand the *cowards* (Apoc. xxi. 8).

Thomas. I entirely agree with you, Philip. No cause can possibly be maintained in the world by men who are ready to relinquish what they know to be right, because they are afraid of other men; and in this I conceive the essence of the cowardice by which a cause is ruined to consist.

Philip. Nevertheless, Thomas, our Lord's own gracious example of His agony in the Garden, when He began, as St. Mark relates, to be afraid and to be weary (Mark xiv. 33), shows us the marvellously withering effect which the sense of being left alone, as He then was, naturally exercises upon the cour-

* "Till spoke false Hannibal at length,
Like stags of ravening wolves the prey,
Why rush to grapple with their strength,
From whom to steal away
The loftiest triumph is, they leave for us to-day?"
Martin's translation.

age of men. Wo unto the man, says Solomon, who is alone, and who, if he fall, has no one to help him (Eccles. iv. 10); for every adversary always presses without any mercy upon his victim, when he believes him to be unbefriended. Thus Sennacherib's general, Rabsheka, in summoning king Ezechias to surrender Jerusalem, takes care to press this one point, "What is this confidence on which thou reliest, and in whom dost thou trust, that thou darest to rebel?" (4 Kings xviii. 19.) But we learn from another remarkable instance in the Scripture that the moment a man knows himself to be powerfully backed and sustained, then his courage immediately revives; the weakness of humanity requiring in a man that he should be able to know that he is not to be left alone. Thus when Eliseus, as the Scripture relates, had retired to a mountain to escape his enemies, seeing how they were now surrounded on all sides with men and chariots sent to seize them, his servant came trembling to Eliseus, and crying, said to him, "Alas, alas, alas! master, what shall we do?" "Fear not," said Eliseus; "for there are more on our side than there are against us;" and when Eliseus had prayed, he said, "Lord, open the eyes of this man, that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of chariots of fire and horsemen surrounding Eliseus (4 Kings vi. 15). Then, seeing how they were protected, Eliseus's servant at once recovered his courage.

Thomas. Yes; but, Philip, I think it may be retorted upon you that Eliseus's servant was enabled by a miracle to see the chariots and the horsemen who were on their side; and before the parallel, which I

presume to be in your mind, is complete, will not you have to say that the Roman Catholics must be able equally to see the saints, whom you doubtless intend me to understand are your protectors?

Philip. It is true, Thomas, that the parallel between the saints whom we cannot see, and the visible horsemen and chariots of Eliseus, is not by any means to be pressed to the strict letter. It is quite the case that we cannot be said to see the glorious company of the saints in the same direct manner as Eliseus's servant saw his protectors; but, nevertheless, although there is unquestionably a great deal of room left for the exercise of the virtue of faith, which St. Paul calls "the argument of things that do not appear" (Heb. x. 1), we are very far indeed from being thrown purely on the invisible world for our protection. "*Ex ungue leonem*," says the old proverb; we may judge of the lion by the footprints he has left on his passage; and in the same manner we may judge of the power of the saints to back and sustain those who are engaged in their cause by the marks they have left impressed upon the whole world. Now I cast my eyes over the earth, and I see it covered with churches, all dedicated to different members of the company of the saints; I see many religious orders, founded by saints, still flourishing in the world. I take up the Church Calendar,—I see nearly every day of the year made into the festival-day of some saint; and thus I do but draw "the argument of that which does not as yet appear" from that which does appear, when I say to myself, "The company of the saints, which can thus lay its hand upon nearly the whole visible world, and set

“ its own mark on the very days as they pass, must be
“ able to afford me at least some portion of the same
“ protection, in boldly and courageously acting the
“ part of a Christian, which the chariots and the horse-
“ men of fire would have afforded to Eliseus and his
“ servant;” and thus, Thomas, a very little reasoning
and discernment is all that is needed to enable the
man who is even by nature timorous to become cour-
ageous as a Roman Catholic ; while the naturally
courageous man may easily become a hero.

Thomas. I see, Philip, that it is plainly impos-
sible for me to resist what you say.

Philip. And then, Thomas, to crown all, you must
admit that we Roman Catholics have a noble prospect
placed before us by our religion, in the glorious and
eternal future society of those whose patronage and
intercession have been our stay and protection during
our present life, while their great and heroic deeds
have been our examples of Christian virtue. All crea-
tion, Thomas, is instinct with the desire for attaining
to companionship with something higher and more
noble than itself. The dog seeks the society of man,
as seeing in the man a superior being ; and men them-
selves think the whole energies of a life not misspent,
if only they can succeed, by any means, in raising them-
selves to a place in a circle which they have judged
to be above what they are themselves. So, you see,
Thomas, a future fellowship with the glorious company
of the saints gathered round the throne of Jesus and
of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin Mother of the King,
plainly appears as the one only unexceptionable am-
bition of the human soul, by which all other false
ambitions ought to be supplanted and swallowed up,

and into which no embittering envy or jealousy can possibly enter.

Thomas. Grant me one more afternoon, Philip, for a final review of the ground we have gone over; and then, with the help of God, I will endeavour to approach the business of my final choice in sober earnest.

DIALOGUE TWELFTH.

THE FINAL DETERMINATION.

SCENE: THOMAS and PHILIP seated in the shade in MR. GOODMAN'S garden in East Sheen.

THOMAS, anticipating that, among other difficulties, the following objections will be strongly urged on the part of his friends and relations, preparatory to his final choice, asks Philip what answers he would be disposed to give to them: (1) *How the Church of Rome comes to make the apparently arrogant and autocratic claim to be the only way of salvation for all men;* (2) *how it happens that the reproach of a visible inferiority in morality, intelligence, and political prosperity, comes to be so generally imputed to the Roman Catholic populations;* (3) *what explanation is to be given of the accusation, which is in every body's mouth, of absolution for sin being commonly sold for money by the Roman Catholic priests;* (4) *what is the reason of the rule of celibacy imposed upon the Roman Catholic clergy.* PHILIP, having satisfied his friend on these points, cautions him, before parting, to beware how he is induced to listen to any domestic voice counselling him not to precipitate his resolution to join the Church of Rome.

Thomas. My dear Philip, all things, according to the wise king's saying, "pass on under heaven within their proper limits" (Eccles. ii. 1); and our inquiry can of course be no exception to this rule. I see the time fast approaching, when, according to the pledge I gave you, I must make up my mind one way or the other—to join, or not to join, the Church of Rome. However, Philip, in order not to leave any ground of scruple open behind me, I should now very much

like to propose to you some few difficulties, not so much because I particularly feel the force of them myself, as that I foresee what objections will most probably be made by my friends when they come to know of my contemplated change. If, therefore, you will be so good as to tell me how you think the objections are best to be answered, I shall, I hope, be all the better prepared to look my friends in the face when they gather about me to try to dissuade me from my resolution.

Philip. With all my heart, Thomas : propose to me your difficulties ; for though I can scarcely be as confident as you seem to be about my being able to furnish you with the proper answers, I shall, of course, be only too happy to do any thing in my power to enable you to meet the objections which you think your friends are likely to make to you.

Thomas. Almost all people then, Philip, are sorely tried when they come in contact with what appears to them as the intolerably arrogant and autocratic pretensions of the Church of Rome to be the one only way of salvation for all men. Such a claim, they say, is in itself nothing less than the most hateful of all possible conspiracies against the liberties of mankind, and quite enough to prove the Church of Rome to be the natural enemy and adversary of humanity. And further, considering the enormous number of gross scandals that are credibly believed to lie at her doors, together with their legitimate natural consequence, in the alienation of so many populations from the Roman Catholic communion, people go on to say that, if the Church of Rome actually were, in the counsels of God, the one only way of salvation for

all men, this would be equivalent in practice to the direct consignment, on the part of God, of so great a number of helpless and innocent victims, who are separated from her communion by no fault of their own, that the mind positively recoils with horror from the thought, and refuses to contemplate it, as absolutely at variance with the love and mercy of God, and with the universality of the Christian redemption effected on the cross of Jesus Christ.

Philip. Your difficulty, Thomas, I fancy, is put in a manner which shows that this is by no means the first time you have either heard of it or have thought about it yourself. To the first charge, then, viz. that of conspiring against the liberties of mankind, I should myself be disposed to reply, that the liberty of error cannot be very reasonably affirmed to be one of the valuable liberties of mankind, against which there possibly can be such a thing as a hateful conspiracy. For, on this principle, every medical and legal practitioner throughout the kingdom would be just as much a wicked conspirator as the Church of Rome herself,—the one profession against the liberties which men have of poisoning themselves with noxious drugs and medicines, and the other against their liberty of ruining themselves by messing and dabbling in law.

Thomas. Then, Philip, am I to understand that you take upon yourself positively to affirm the proposition, that the Church of Rome is not in any way the enemy of the freedom of men? for if this be your ground of defence, your adversaries, if I mistake not, will to a man be resolutely determined to dispute it with you; for I hardly know any thing of which they

are so unusually loud in their denunciations, as of the notoriously grinding spiritual tyranny and despotism of the Church of Rome.

Philip. No reasonable man will ever think of denying that there can be no human freedom in any society which is not built on the truth, and on the just and discreet administration of the law, which is the application of the truth to the condition of society. Where then, Thomas, can human freedom be found upon earth, if it is not found in the Church of Rome, which, as you have seen, is the only known perfect society that is built on the truth and on the law, which, as we have said, is the application of the truth to human life? Every Roman Catholic, as you may easily perceive, is what he is, solely in virtue of the voluntary adherence of his own mind and will to the truth on which the Church of Rome is built; and what is a reliable evidence of freedom, if it be not the voluntary choice and act of the man who is free, embracing, by the grace of God, the truth, and conforming himself to the law that is the living application of the truth? "Thy Word," says our Lord, addressing His eternal Father, "is truth" (John xvii. 17); and addressing His disciples, He says, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). Thus you may plainly see, Thomas, that, apart from the truth, there is, according to our Lord's judgment, no possibility of any freedom at all.

Thomas. Then your assertion is, Philip, that the Roman Catholic is a free man in the only true sense of the word freedom, because he adheres, by his own will, to the truth. But now, suppose the times of persecution and of the penal laws were to return, how

would you be able to say then that the Roman Catholics would be free ?

Philip. A time of penal laws and persecution, Thomas, is the rod of Divine correction which Almighty God holds in His own hands over us ; and when it pleases Him to visit us in this way, it is then for us to humble ourselves under His fatherly hand, and to confess the sins which have brought down the chastisement. But persecution is not, on this account, able to take away Christian freedom ; as St. Augustine beautifully says : “ An inferior may be trampled upon ; but “ he is not an inferior who, however great his bodily “ sufferings may be, has his heart fixed upon heaven.”* Those who imagine that human freedom can be securely built upon merely human laws have not properly considered the true nature of the shifting sandbank on which all merely human laws themselves rest. And how little of solid guarantee these same human laws are able to afford for the liberties of the Roman Catholics, plainly appears from the solemn assurance of the whole united Catholic Episcopate, which was given to Pius IX. last year (1862), in Rome, in the memorable words which cannot be supposed to have been merely spoken in the air : “ WE ARE READY TO GO WITH THEE TO PRISON AND TO DEATH.” Words such as these, Thomas, must be looked upon by every reflecting mind as among the pregnant signs of the times ; for those only can be free, as true Christians understand freedom, who, after the pattern of Pius IX., are ready, on the fitting occasion, to go to prison and to death. As long as a man fears either prison or death, the devil has him in

* *Treatise on the Sermon upon the Mount*, chap. vi.

his power through this very fear ; and hence St. Paul says of our Lord, that " by His death on the cross " He overthrew him who had the empire of death, to " wit, the devil, that He might set free those who, all " their life long, were liable to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14).

Thomas. All men, Philip, I think, must admit the nobility and generosity of a cause that teaches men to give their lives a sacrifice for it ; for the devil says, in the book of Job, " Skin for skin : every thing that a man hath he will give for his life" (Job ii. 4). If, then, the Church of Rome really gives men a cause which they love more than they love their own lives, its cause must plainly come from God ; for men will love nothing that is merely their own and of this world, to the extent of being ready deliberately to surrender their own lives for it. But now, what have you to say, Philip, to the case of those who are separated from the Church of Rome, more especially such as are so through no precise fault or will of their own : are they then really out of the pale of salvation ?

Philip. Let me answer your question, Thomas, by asking you another. If two men have fallen into the water, and are both on the point of being drowned, when a plank is thrown to them from the shore, of which, however, only one, as it happens, is able to seize hold, is it the act of throwing the plank to help them both to escape that causes the one who will be drowned to lose his life ; or is it the man's own act in having himself fallen into the water, when he need not perhaps have gone near the water at all ?

Thomas. The man who thus loses his life, Philip, will owe his loss of it entirely to his own fault or misfortune in falling into the water ; the throwing

the plank to him is an act of mercy, intended to save him, and which it is only a great pity if it should fail of success.

Philip. Then the case, Thomas, with the Church of Rome is exactly parallel. The Church of Rome is not the keeper of the keys which govern the giving of the Sacrament of Baptism, by which men are admitted into the kingdom of heaven as fellow-citizens of the saints of Jesus Christ; and there are, in consequence, immense numbers of those persons all over the world, who, in virtue of their true Christian baptism, have acquired just the same title to the glories of the kingdom of heaven as any Roman Catholic. The Church of Rome has always confessed one baptism only for the remission of sins, respecting which she declares that the power of conferring it is no exclusive prerogative of hers, but that it is given by Jesus Christ to every living man, woman, or child, whether Christian or not, who is acquainted with the proper form of words, and intends to do what the Church does. The innumerable souls which have been thus united to the Divine Pastor, Jesus Christ, by His own Sacrament of Baptism, cannot be conceived otherwise than as most dear to Him, and the object of His heavenly care and solicitude. But this is not to blind us to their helpless condition, if they fall into the water without the plank for the shipwrecked which the Church of Rome incessantly labours to place within their reach, by sending her missionaries into all lands, provided with powers of absolution for the remission of all the sins of men. Nor again, Thomas, ought this in the least to blind us as to the real danger under which these persons

must live, of falling into the hands of both the deceivers and the deceived, who will be liable to poison their whole life with false and soul-destroying doctrines, that do not come from out of the mouth of God.

Thomas. I remember once hearing a Jew say, in reply to a clergyman of the Church of England, who had been trying to reason him into a belief of the Christian religion: "If I could believe all that you say you believe, sir, I should not be able to rest in my room as quietly as you do for a single hour. I should be obliged to go out into the whole world proclaiming my belief." This, it would appear from what you say, Philip, is the spirit that animates the Pope in sending his missionaries all over the world.

Philip. You are quite right, Thomas; and I think you will easily see that the plank for the shipwrecked, which it appertains to the Church of Rome to offer to all, cannot possibly make any one worse off as regards salvation. It is not the Church of Rome who first uttered the words, "Enter in by the narrow gate; for broad is the gate, and wide is the way, that leadeth to perdition, and many there be that enter it. How narrow is the gate, and how strait is the way, that leadeth to life! and few there be that find it" (Matt. viii. 13). And people, I think, should certainly also consider that those who perished in the waters of the Deluge did not by any means therefore perish because the Ark was the one way of salvation, but because they themselves refused to go into the Ark when they were invited to come into it.

Thomas. I think your answer, Philip, is quite satisfactory; and so, to proceed, I fancy I shall be sure

to hear my friends object to me, in the next place, that the Roman Catholic religion invariably tends to degrade and debase the moral and intellectual, as well as the political, condition of all the people who profess it; a fact which, they will say, is asserted on all hands to be proved by such convincing evidence, that it is in vain to think of denying it; and yet, unless it can not only be denied, but also be credibly disproved, it plainly convicts the Roman Catholic religion of being nothing better than the degrading and debasing superstition which people so universally say it is. What is the way, Philip, then, which you would think best adapted to repel a reproach of so serious a kind as this?

Philip. I should myself, Thomas, be disposed to reply very briefly, that the argument is one that cannot possibly lead to any conclusion, and that the adversaries in consequence only waste their time in urging it against the Church of Rome. There were various periods in the history of the Hebrews when the very same comparison might have been instituted between them and the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Babylonians, and the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, yielding on each occasion a result at least equally disparaging to the Hebrews and favourable to the heathens; and yet no sane man, Thomas, has ever thought of arguing that the Hebrews ceased on this account to be the chosen people of God.

Thomas. There is no doubt some reason and truth in what you say, Philip, but still it hardly seems to me to meet the full force of the accusation; for the objection evidently supposes that it lies deep in the nature of the true religion, which indeed seems emi-

nently probable, that it should be seen to be able to improve and ameliorate the temporal condition of the people who profess it—it being, as they will say, perfectly according to right reason to connect the idea of a low and degrading superstition with the actually existing mean and degraded condition of the particular people who are found professing it.

Philip. I entirely grant you, Thomas, that the idea of a mean and degraded condition admits, with perfect justice, of being connected together in the right reason of men with that of a degrading superstition; but then, as I have just shown you, this is not, by any means, the whole truth; for it plainly appears also that the Hebrew people, who possessed a religion universally acknowledged to be Divine, were nevertheless able to fall into a very abject and degraded condition, in spite of their Divine religion; and in their case it was certainly not owing to their Divine religion that they did so fall, but owing to their own disregard and contempt of their Divine religion; as the prophet says, “Israel hath cast off that which is good; therefore the enemy shall persecute him” (Osee viii. 3). The Jews had been seen by all people to have been raised by fidelity to their religion to a condition of the greatest wealth and prosperity in the time of Solomon; and when they afterwards fell into great degradation, it was entirely by their own fault and faithlessness.

Thomas. Then, Philip, your argument, if I rightly understand it, goes to say, that the reproach of inferiority, which is so commonly brought against the Roman Catholics, supposing it to be reasonably just and well-founded (which you admit to be possible), only proves the particular persons to whom the reproach

attaches to have failed in a corresponding degree in their fidelity to the God of the Christian religion, who on this account suffers them to be visited with temporal humiliation and reproach, because, like faithless Israel, they have cast off that which is good.

Philip. Men, I think, Thomas, must observe a rule of very necessary caution and reserve in undertaking to interpret every thing that they may see of the judgments of the God of the Christian religion altogether in their own way. Our Lord said, "Think you that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloe fell, and killed them every one, were sinners above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you no; but except you do penance, you shall all perish in like manner" (Luke xiii. 4). At the same time, also, I quite think we must boldly acknowledge, that while the Christian heroes will always be at liberty to trample, as much as ever they can desire, upon all the honours and good things of the present world, and while they may always choose of their own free will as much voluntary abjection as they please, which then becomes something sanctified and venerable in their persons, it is no part whatever of the government of Jesus Christ to leave the people who are faithful to Him in any condition of compulsory meanness and abjection, in which the finger of scorn will be pointed at them; but, on the contrary, fidelity to Jesus Christ is at all times the natural way to honour and exaltation in this world for those who are not moved, like St. Francis of Assisi, to seek directly from Jesus Christ the higher supernatural path of a sanctified humiliation and abjection. Our Lord said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more

“ abundantly” (John x. 10). If, therefore, Pagan Rome could say to its false gods,

“ Di, probos mores docili juventæ,
Di senectuti placidæ quietem ;
Romulæ genti date, remque prolemque
Et decus omne”

(*Carmen Seculare*),*

while Christian Rome could make no such prayer to Jesus Christ for temporal blessings and increase, how could our Lord have said with truth that “ He came that men might not only have life, but have “ it more abundantly” ? We must, therefore, I think, never have the least kind of difficulty in asserting that, while it will always be perfectly possible for the Roman Catholics, by their own faithlessness, to bring themselves into a very mean and abject condition indeed in the present life, it will, notwithstanding, be perfectly true that it is the direct tendency of the Roman Catholic religion to exalt the Roman Catholics to temporal honour and prosperity, provided they are faithful to the cause of religion and of their Church ; for the inspired prophet explains the sufferings and humiliations of Israel in no other way than by saying to them, “ Your sins have separated between you and your God” (Isaias lix. 2). However, Thomas, I should think a very strict rule of caution and reserve ex-

* “ Ye powers divine,
Unto our docile youth give morals pure ;
Ye powers divine,
To placid age give peace ;
And to the stock of Romulus insure
Dominion vast, a never-failing line,
And in all noble things still make them to increase.”
Martin's translation.

tremely desirable in attempting to make use of this general truth for a positive judgment, involving its application to any given individual case; and no individual judgment on this score, I think, can be deemed a light matter in the face of the words which say, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Thomas. Well but, Philip, if a man has to contemplate taking such a step as joining the communion of the Church of Rome, how is he to avoid naturally asking himself the question, What sort of people shall I find the Roman Catholics to be when I come among them? and then, if his eyes are forced to rest on their mean and degraded condition, and if he conceives in consequence a strong disgust and dislike to what he sees, will not this be extremely likely to drive him away from the thought of becoming a Roman Catholic, notwithstanding all your philosophical explanation of the way in which the Roman Catholics may have come into their unfortunate condition?

Philip. What are we to do, Thomas? Our Lord has said, "Woe unto the world, because of scandals." We cannot help scandals: our Lord Himself could not help them; for He says, "It needs must that scandals will come" (Matt. xviii. 7). However, hear what such a teacher as St. Augustine says with reference to your question, and observe that he is busily persuading a young man to become a Catholic (just as I am now persuading you), with which same purpose in view he speaks to him thus: "Most of all, you must beware of
" being scandalised by the men whom you will find in
" the very Catholic Church herself, as the chaff which
" she carries for a time until the day of her purging
" arrives. For you will see among the Christians

“ many drunkards, usurers, cheats, dice-players, adulterers, fornicators, dealers with the devil, men given up to sacrilegious incantations and remedies, and to divining in impious arts ; you will see that just the same crowds fill the Christian churches on the festival-days of the Christians, that at other times are found in the theatres and temples of the heathens.” You see, Thomas, St. Augustine has no fear of driving away the man whom he is labouring to convert, by giving him an honest picture of the social condition of the Catholic Church of his day. He goes on to say : “ The end of all the men that persevere in such courses is ‘ *damnation*.’ When, therefore, you come to perceive that a very great many not only do these things, but defend them, and recommend others to do the same, do you keep close to the law of God, and do not follow the example of those who break it. Do you seek the society of the good, whom you will see loving the king, together with yourself. And you will find very many such whenever you begin to be one of this sort yourself” (*De Catech. Rud.*).

Thomas. These words of St. Augustine, I confess, are very much to the purpose, Philip ; but still it seems to me, all the same, that this is a point which will weigh with the greatest force upon the minds of a very large number of people.

Philip. Very possibly it may, Thomas ; but if it should, what then ? You will always be able to act the part of a sensible man yourself, whatever other people may do ; and the mere fact by itself of being run down and decried, as you may readily see, constitutes no real reason why the society of those who

suffer this treatment should be either avoided or despised. The whole fair sex, for example, has in all ages been the butt at which lampooners have aimed their shafts :

“Yet mark the fate of a whole sex of queens,
Power all their end, but beauty all the means ;
In youth they conquer with so wild a rage
As leaves them scarce a subject in their age ;
For foreign glory, foreign joy, they roam,
No thought of peace and happiness at home”
(Pope, *Epistle* ii.).

And yet what sane man, seeking the joys and comfort of home, ever suffered himself to be deterred from the choice of a partner for life from among the daughters of Eve by any such lampooners as these and their satires? In spite, then, of what people may say to try to frighten you away, I think, Thomas, you may most reasonably calculate on finding some excellent companionship among the Roman Catholics, if, by the grace of God, you should end by making up your mind to come among them.

Thomas. Your illustration, Philip, rather touches me on the weak side, having passed many years of married life very happily myself. However, to proceed with our business. I think I hinted to you that I do not so much feel the force of these difficulties myself, as I wish to be prepared with an answer to what my captious and good-natured relatives may come and object to me. The next point, then, on which I expect they will be almost sure to attack me will be by saying that the Roman Catholic priests are continually in the habit of selling the absolution of their Church for money. What will it be best to reply to such an accusation as this?

Philip. I will relate to you, Thomas, an answer which a friend of mine once told me that he gave to an acquaintance, who one day came to him and bluntly taxed him with the very thing you are now saying. "Mr. C., every body knows that in your Church you can get absolution for any sin you like to commit for 50*l.*;" to which the reply was, "Mr. J., I have been fifty years a Catholic without knowing this, and I am ready to give you 50*l.* down if you will take me to the place and show me where I can get it. But any how, by your own words, you admit that the absolution of my Church must be worth something, if you say that we are in the habit of paying 50*l.* for it. Now I never yet heard of any body who was ready to offer as much as fifty pence for the absolution of your Church." The simple truth is, Thomas, that, wherever there is any thing of any value, it is in human nature to try, the one side to buy it, and the other side to sell it for money. Thus, among the twelve Apostles themselves, there was one who sought to make a little money for himself by privately selling Jesus Christ to the High-Priests; and Simon Magus came to St. Peter and offered money to him to buy the gifts of the Holy Ghost. So you see, Thomas, that the very accusation itself renders a most remarkable involuntary testimony to the reality and truth of the Divine gift, which is thus said to be commonly sold for money, and which, were it not equally commonly known to be Divine, would as certainly not be supposed capable of eliciting any offer of money for its purchase.

Thomas. I think, Philip, we may consider this calumny to be disposed of; and now I can almost im-

agine I already hear some of my friends vehemently declaiming against the Roman Catholic religion on account of the rule of celibacy which it imposes upon its clergy. I should much like to hear your explanation of the reason of this rule, especially as I see, from the Scripture, that it was not imposed upon either the prophets or the priests under the Mosaic law.

Philip. You are no doubt, Thomas, well acquainted with the fact, that, while Moses, the author of the Mosaic Law, was a married man with several children, Jesus Christ, the Author of the Christian, or the New Law, was a Celibate and a Virgin ; and if therefore it is, as our Lord says, "sufficient for the disciple that he be as his Master" (Matt. x. 25), it is at least perfectly becoming that the Christian priesthood should follow in this respect the example set by their own Chief. And besides, as no one enters the calling of the priesthood otherwise than by his own act and deed, its rule of celibacy cannot be said to impose a hardship upon any body ; for every man who wishes to have the happiness of married life remains perfectly free to enter any other calling to which the condition of celibacy is not annexed. And, moreover, I think there is a very obvious practical reason that may be given for the rule of celibacy, which is imposed upon the Roman Catholic clergy, the force of which at least all the laity ought to be very ready to admit. "No man," says St. Paul, "entering military service involves "himself in the world's business, that he may please "him to whom he hath bound himself" (2 Tim. ii. 4). Suppose then, Thomas, you were lying sick of a typhus fever, and that you desired the visit of a minister of

religion to assist you to make as religious an end of your life as you could, that you might pass into the next world as far as possible in the manner that becomes a Christian ; which of the two, Thomas, do you think would be the most likely to respond with the necessary readiness and alacrity to your call—the minister about whose neck some domestic Andromache would be sure to throw her arms and to entreat him, out of love for herself and the children, not to expose himself to the danger of any infection ; or the celibate priest, who is bound, by the sacred obligation of his calling, to answer your summons, without giving so much as a thought to the danger to which his own life may be exposed ?

Thomas. Placed in the light in which you put the case, Philip, there cannot be a doubt which of the two would be most to be relied upon ; and, as I suppose that this is really the main gist of the question as far as the laity are concerned, viz. that they may have the requisite guarantee that they can perfectly depend upon obtaining the services of their clergy whenever they come to need them, your answer, I think, may be said to be conclusive. However, Philip, I see very plainly I might go on for ever putting questions to you of this nature, the effect of which would really be much more to distract my attention from the choice which I have now to make, rather than to prepare me the better for making it ; so I think we may now fairly consider that we have done our work, and that our labour is come to an end.

Philip. Well, Thomas, I perfectly agree with you. There are many things, as you cannot but very well know, which we have not attempted to examine toge-

ther ; but, as you are also well aware, I have throughout maintained that they are one and all comprised in the single question, Who is the safe guide to follow in religion ? Which question we Roman Catholics answer not only by affirming the Roman Pontiff to be the only safe guide, but by setting the example of implicitly following his guidance ourselves ; as witness the solemn declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to which we all, high and low, in every nation, subscribe on his single word.

“ There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy,”

says Hamlet to his friend ; and while it is perfectly true that those who only wish for pretexts on which to pick up a specious quarrel with the Roman Catholic religion can find hundreds of clever wits at their call, ready to supply as many objections as they can possibly desire, it is also true that those who go in search of these objections only unhappily turn the ingenuity to which they have had recourse into a weapon against themselves, with which to destroy their hopes of a calm and tranquil peace of mind in the present life, and to cut themselves off from the blessed hope of being one day united to the company of the saints in the presence of their King for all eternity.

Thomas. I do not really see, Philip, that I stand in need now of any thing else, except only of the grace of God, to give me the courage to pass the Rubicon, and to make my public profession of the Roman Catholic faith ; so you must now aid your hard-headed and doubting old friend by your prayers, with all the

same zeal with which you have hitherto been trying to set him in the right way by your reasoning.

Philip. This you may be sure I shall do, Thomas, with all my power, such as it may be; but let me whisper a word into your ear before parting, not to be above remembering the vulgar proverb, "Delays are dangerous." You will easily call to mind Virgil's description of Æneas's resolve to quit Carthage and the arms of Dido, in order to comply with the divine call, which summoned him to the country of the future Rome; and you will recollect how violently, and yet how vainly, Dido sought to break his purpose, and to retain him by her side. He answers her that a divine voice had called him to the country of the future Rome:

"Ipse deum manifesto in lumine vidi
Intrantem muros, vocemque his auribus hausi.
Desine meque tuis incendere teque querelis;
Italiam non sponte sequor" (*Æneid*, lib. iv. 361).*

Dido's grief and vexation, on hearing these words of Æneas, knows no bounds. She upbraids him with his hardness of heart:

"Duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt ubera tigres" (366).†

Then she tells him that his resolve will be her death, and threatens that her ghost shall haunt him:

* "These eyes the deity beheld
Entering these walls, confessed in radiant light;
These ears received his voice. Cease, then, oh, cease
Thyself and me with vain complaints to move;
Italia not self-guided I pursue."

† "Thee horrid Caucasus,
Amidst impenetrable rocks, brought forth,
And with their milk Hyrcanian tigers fed."

“Sequar atris ignibus absens,
Et, quum frigida mors anima seduxerit artus,
Omnibus umbra locis adero. Dabis, improbe, pœnas;
Audiam, et hæc Manes, veniet mihi fama sub imos” (387).*

But observe, Thomas, after the paroxysm of anger has passed, and the inflexible resolve of Æneas has begun to tell on the weaker nature of Dido, then there succeeds the glimmering of a woman's hope, that the resolve which could not be broken might be delayed. So she calls her sister Anna, and entreats her to go on an embassy to Æneas :

“I, soror, atque hostem supplex affare superbum ; . . .
. . . extremum hoc miseræ det munus amanti :
Expectet facilemque fugam, ventosque ferentes” (430).†

Anna willingly lends herself to her sister's request, and becomes the bearer to Æneas of Dido's petition, that he would grant her a brief delay. Thomas, only a brief delay, and on so reasonable a ground, “to wait for a fair wind, for his better departure.” With what success, however, does Anna plead ?

“Talibus orabat ; talesque miserrima fletus
Fertque refertque soror. Sed nullis ille movetur
Fletibus, aut voces ullas tractabilis audit ;
Fata obstant, placidasque viri deus obstruit aures” (440).‡

* “I will pursue thee still.
Though absent will pursue with blackest flames ;
And when cold death shall have called forth my soul,
A ghost I'll haunt thee still in every place.
Vengeance awaits thee, wretch !”

† “Go then, my sister ; sue the haughty foe.
. This last boon
Let him but grant to his afflicted love,
T' await an easy flight and wafting winds.”

‡ “The plaintive sister urges o'er and o'er ;
But by no tears or wallings is the chief

Æneas, you perceive, Thomas, is under a directing voice that is stronger than Dido's love ; and with Divine inspirations human influences must contend in vain. But nevertheless, in spite of his consciousness of an inflexible resolution, Æneas appears quite disposed to take his own time ; and the thought of there being any overruling necessity for precipitation does not so much as appear to cross his mind :

“*Æneas celsa in puppi, jam certus eundi
Carpebat somnos, rebus jam rite paratis.*”*

He has no doubt of his own resolve, and sees no necessity for any hurry. Not so, however, the Divine Providence which is watching over him. A voice from another world now comes to him in his sleep, and calls to him :

“*Nate dea, potes hoc sub casu ducere somnos ?
Nec, quæ te circum stent deinde pericula, cernis ?
Dæmæ ! nec Zephyros audis spirare secundos. * *
Non fugis hinc præceps, dum præcipitare potestas ? * *
Eia age, rumpe moras !*” (569.)†

Now, my dear Thomas, beware, above all things, of the domestic Dido, who has learned to know of your inflexible resolution to join the communion of the

Aught moved, nor any words hears tractable.
The fates withstand, and Jove hath stopt his ears.”

* “*Æneas, on his lofty galley's stern,
Fixed on departure, all now due prepared,
Was tasting sleep.*”

† “*In such a threatening hour
Canst thou prolong thy sleep, nor dost perceive
What perils thence environ thee around ?
Fliest thou not swift, whilst thou hast power to fly ?
Rouse thee, and fly.*” *Bereford's translation.*

Church of Rome, and who comes to you only to beg that you would grant your friends a little delay, and not use such needless precipitation. Beware of the plausible human pretext,

“Expectet facilemque fugam, ventosque ferentes.”

Remember the Divine voice :

“Eia age, rumpe moras !”

Thomas. My dear Philip, I do not know how I am to express the depth of my gratitude to you for all the pains you have so kindly and so patiently taken to put me in the right way, better than by again and again asking you to complete your good work by praying for me, that I may have the grace of God given to me, to enable me to enter the communion of the Roman Catholic Church without any further delay.

Philip. Thomas, you have received, as it is confidently to be believed, the Divine grace of Christian baptism long ago; so that another and an easy step is all that is now needed to reconcile you to the Mother and Mistress of all the Churches, and to bring you under the guardianship of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and beneath the shelter of the tree of Eternal Life. God speed you, Thomas, in your resolve !

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

DIALOGUE SECOND. *The authority of the Pope* (p. 29).

THE Plenary Council of all the prelates of North America, including the Archbishop and Bishops of six provinces (five of which have been created since 1829), assembled in Baltimore on the 8th of May 1852, has placed the following confession of the supreme authority of the Sovereign Pontiff at the head of its decrees. It affords a beautiful example of a missionary clergy building all their hopes of a missionary harvest on the foundation which God Himself has laid.

Decrees of the Council.

The Fathers of this Plenary Council, assembled from all the United States of North America, the Archbishop of Baltimore presiding as Legate of the Apostolic See, herein make profession of the entire obedience (*summum obsequium*) which they give to the Apostolic Roman See. For they acknowledge, according to the definition promulgated in the Council of Florence, the Roman Pontiff to be the successor of the Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, the true Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Head of the whole Church, and the Father and Teacher of all the Christians; and they further recognise that there has been given to him, in the blessed Peter, by our Lord Jesus Christ, plenitude of power for the feeding, ruling, and governing the Universal Church. They therefore acknowledge the most blessed Pontiff Pius IX. to have been appointed the Head of the whole Episcopacy by Divine right, and that it appertains to him to confirm his brethren, seeing that there is but one who is pastor of all.

Moreover, they profess the doctrine in its entirety,—which, having been delivered by the Apostles, it is certain has ever been preserved in the Roman Church by the succession of its Bishops,—as the same is set forth in the decrees of the Œcumenic Councils, and especially in the decrees of the Council of Trent, and in the constitutions of the Sovereign Pontiffs (*Concilium Plenarium, Baltimori habitum*, p. 48. J. Murphy, Baltimore, 1858).

DIALOGUE THIRD. *The necessity of a direct Divine revelation to make the way of salvation plain and simple to the multitude of men, who have no capacities for philosophical inquiries (p. 34).*

St. Thomas, in the introduction to his *Summa of Theology*, arguing on the necessity of a body of sacred doctrine being given to men, in addition to philosophical learning, reasons as follows :

"I answer, that we must say it is necessary for the salvation of men that, besides philosophical learning, which is worked out by human reason, there should be a body of sacred doctrine that is according to a Divine revelation. First, because man is ordered to God, as to a certain end which exceeds the comprehension of reason ; according to the words of Isaias, 'The eye, O God, hath not seen without Thee what Thou hast prepared for those that love Thee' (Isaias lxiiv. 4). And it is necessary that the end should be known to men, who have to order their actions and intentions to their end ; whence it is plainly necessary that many things which exceed human reason should be made known to men by a Divine revelation.

"And over and above those things which can be investigated concerning God by human reason, it was also necessary that man should be instructed by a Divine revelation ; for the truth concerning God investigated by reason would come to man only from a few, slowly and with the admixture of many errors, notwithstanding that the whole salvation of men, which is in God, would depend upon this truth. In order, therefore, that salvation might come to men with greater certainty and fitness, it was necessary that men should be instructed in Divine things by a Divine revelation.

"To the first objection, therefore, it is to be answered that, although the things that are higher than a man's natural knowledge are not to be sought for by reason, yet, seeing that they are revealed by God, they are to be received by faith ; hence in the same verse of Ecclesiasticus it is added, '*for many things have been shown to thee above the sense of men*'" (*Summa Theologicæ*, pars Ima, quæst. Ima).

The honour which the Church pays to the natural reason of men (p. 39).

The common current calumny that the Roman Catholic religion is the natural adversary of the human intelligence is simply and entirely the result of popular ignorance, except, indeed, where it may happen to

derive some colourable justification from the indiscretion of a few Roman Catholic writers. St. Thomas of Aquin, the great doctor of the thirteenth century, may be seen to have built up the whole fabric of his theology on the groundwork of the philosophy of Aristotle, which, in other words, is nothing else than the perfection of right natural reason. A brief specimen of the honour which St. Thomas assigns to the natural human reason will be interesting to the reader.

After deducing the same conclusion, viz. that beatitude consists in the knowledge of God through the intellect, from three other arguments, he reasons as follows. Quoting from Aristotle the principle that, "whatever moves with more vigour subsequently than at first " cannot remain for ever moving, but must tend to something determinate," he proceeds to observe : We find this to be the case with the desire of knowing ; for the more things any one knows, so much the more he desires to know. The natural desire, therefore, that a man has for acquiring knowledge tends to some determinate end ; but this can be nothing else but the most noble object that can be known (*nobilissimum scibile*), which is God. The knowledge of God is thus the last end of man. But the last end of an intellectual being is called its happiness or beatitude, for this is what every intellectual being desires as its ultimate end, and as that which is desirable for what it is in itself alone. Whence it is plain that the ultimate happiness and beatitude of every intellectual being is to know God (*Deum cognoscere*). *Contra Gentiles*, lib. iii.

DIALOGUE FOURTH. *The Sacrifice of the Mass* (p. 55).

Extracts from the Catechism of the Council of Trent, part ii. § lxxxi., relative to the Sacrifice of the Mass :

§ lxxxi. *The figures and prophecies of the Sacrifice of the Mass.*—But if we go in search of the figures and prophecies of this Sacrifice, which are contained in the Old Testament, the prophet Malachias has most plainly predicted it in the following words : "From the rising of the sun to its setting, My name is great among the Gentiles ; and in every place there is offered and sacrificed to My name a clean oblation ; for My name is great among the nations, saith the Lord of Hosts" (*Mal. i. 11*). And we may trace its usage nowhere more clearly expressed than in the sacrifice of Melchisedec ; for the Saviour Himself, declaring that He had been constituted for ever a priest after the order of Melchisedec, offered His own body and blood to God the Father in the Last Supper under the forms of bread and wine.

§ lxxxii. *The Sacrifice of the Mass and of the Cross one and the same.*—We confess, and so it ought to be understood, that what is performed in

the Mass is one and the same sacrifice which was offered upon the cross, inasmuch as the Victim is one and the same; that is to say, Christ our Lord, who offered Himself once only, in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross. For the bloody and the unbloody victim are not two victims, but only one, the sacrifice of which is daily renewed in the Mass, in pursuance of the Lord's command, "Do this in commemoration of Me."

§ lxxxiii. *Christ and the priests are one priesthood.*—But Christ the Lord is one and the same priest; for the ministers who officiate in the sacrifice represent the person of Christ when they make His body and blood, as is shown by the words of the consecration; for the priest does not say, "This is the body of Christ," but "This is My body;" that is to say, as representing the person of Christ the Lord, he converts the substance of the bread and wine into the true substance of His body and blood.

§ lxxxiv. *The Mass is a sacrifice of praise and propitiation.*—The case standing thus, it is to be taught without the least hesitation, as the sacred Synod itself has set forth, that the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass is not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or a naked commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished upon the cross, but a truly propitiatory sacrifice by which God is rendered propitious to us.

§ lxxxvi. *The Mass is profitable to both the living and the dead.*—The curates in charge of parishes shall teach the people that the efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass is such as not only to profit the offerer of the Mass and celebrant, but also to benefit all the faithful, whether they are now living with us on the earth, or whether, being dead in the Lord, they are not yet fully discharged from their sins. For, as appears from the most certain traditions of the Apostles, this sacrifice is not the less profitably offered for the departed than for the sins of the living, for the penalties and satisfactions to which they are liable, and for whatever other distresses and calamities happen to men.

DIALOGUE FIFTH. *The meaning of the term "apostolic" further explained (p. 63).*

The true force and meaning of the name "Apostolic" Church may be a little further elucidated in the following manner. In the Christian character there are two entirely distinct features, which find their appropriate name in the respective words "holy" and "apostolic." The Mosaic law taught men to be "holy" without attempting to teach them to be "apostolic;"—"Be ye holy; for I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lev. xi. 44). Under the term "holy" is comprised all that appertains to

the careful practice of the duties and the ceremonies prescribed and enjoined by the religion, but without implying any especial duty of zeal in the work of bringing and persuading others to embrace the religion, in order that they may become holy according to its precepts. Hence it was that the Mosaic religion remained for many generations only the national religion of the Hebrew people, teaching them holiness, but not eliciting in them more than very occasional efforts to make proselytes, and then only proselytes of individuals, never of whole nations or people. When our Lord came, He did not teach a new holiness essentially differing from that taught by Moses, however He may have superseded portions of Moses's doctrines; but He founded a Church with an express apostolic mission to go about the world gathering together new people to learn and observe the holiness which had been, in its essential features, already taught to the Hebrews from the beginning. Every Christian thus requires two quite distinct features in order to complete his religious character, viz. *holiness* and *apostolicity*, whereas the Jew required only one, viz. holiness. In other words, a Christian is required to be zealous in his own person in the practice of all the duties and observances that are prescribed by his faith, which answers to the term *holy*; and over and above this he must also be zealous, according to his power, to persuade and move others to seek after holiness, in the same manner as he himself does, which is in practice to be *apostolic*. In this manner no one is a perfect Christian who is not formed on the true model of a Christian, in which zeal for personal holiness is united with zeal for converting others, and the true model of every society is to be sought for in its head: as the Scripture says, "Qualis est rector civitatis tales et inhabitantes in eâ,"—"Such as is the ruler of the city, such are they who dwell in it" (Ecclus. x. 2). Hence, it is well worth remarking that, in the Roman Catholic Church, the Sovereign Pontiff is every where recognised as the official representative of both these features in the Christian character, for his two commonest titles are "Sanctissimus Dominus" ("Most Holy Lord") and "Dominus Apostolicus" ("Apostolic Lord"). The most indisputable sign of the true Apostolic Church is thus that it will be seen to be always proclaiming its Divine calling to be necessarily busy as a society in gathering together new people to practise its rules of holy living; and also in inculcating upon the individual Christians that they should seek to have the apostolic spirit, and each in their own measure be busy and active in persuading others to believe and practise what they believe and practise themselves.

A beautiful instance of the manner in which the apostolic spirit still lives and works in the world is found in the letter which the Plenary

Council of the prelates of North America addressed to Pius IX., on sending their decrees for his revision.

"Most holy Father,—On meeting together from the separate districts of this vast region to hold our Plenary Council, our first act is to turn our eyes to you, most blessed Father. For if we desire Christ the Lord to be present at our deliberations, what other leader can we have than him to whom He, being the Saviour of all, committed the care of His sheep and His lambs, and whom He has chosen above all others to confirm the brethren?

"Beyond doubt it will be consoling to your paternal heart to hear what great things God is doing in this part of the vineyard to advance the glory of His name. Where, a few years ago, the name of God was unknown, we rejoice that there the true faith is preached on all sides, the pure oblation is offered, and that He is now adored in spirit and in truth. In this very metropolitan city, where, in the memory of those now living, a single priest came from a great distance a few times each year to console a little flock, we now see several large and well-frequented churches, and not a few pious institutions in a flourishing condition. Nor is it in this city only that God has deigned to grant the most abundant increase to our labours. Our infant Church, within the space of a single life, has received such an increase, that it has not only been divided into dioceses, but into provinces; so that we have assembled together six Archbishops and twenty-two Bishops to hold our Council.

"Before, however, we return to our churches, we long most intensely to express the inmost feeling of our minds to you, most blessed Father. We desire, with peculiar affection, to commend to those who shall come after us the love, the reverence, and obedience towards you and your apostolic chair with which we are ourselves filled, as a most precious inheritance which we hold to be above all price. For we have known by experience that nothing conduces more to strengthen faith, and to increase the piety that springs from faith, than to cherish love and filial obedience to the Apostolic See, which is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches.

"Whether we turn over the monuments of the ancient times, or the history of our own generation, we shall see the light of faith every where preserved by Peter, and that heresies and schisms then only arose when the way to errors and vices was thrown open by the diminution of respect for the Apostolic See. In vain have men tried to appeal to the great deeds of their ancestors and to the soil of their country, stained with the blood of martyrs,—in vain have they pointed to the monuments of ancient piety, when this love and respect has been wanting among

them. First, faith has been seen to grow feeble, and later on, entirely to die out. Churches of this sort have come to be mere *human* institutions; and after having lost the power of God, they seem rather to be a masquerade for the purpose of mocking men than churches for the purpose of showing the way of salvation.

"It has come to pass, indeed, by the mercy of God, that the event has turned out more happily; yet, when such has been the case, it has been solely owing to a return of the ancient love for the Apostolic See, which has caused health to be again sought for from the fountain from whence God has decreed that the life of the Churches shall flow." Et seq.*

DIALOGUE FIFTH. *Miracles are intended to continue, as a sign or finger-post pointing the way to the true faith to the end of the world (p. 67).*

The opinion commonly maintained among learned Protestant writers respecting miracles—in which all the educated classes of Protestants more or less participate—is, that they have now entirely ceased in the whole world; and the reason by which they commonly attempt to account for the fact of this cessation which they have assumed is, that when the utility and necessity for miracles—which they admit, in the earlier ages of the Church, to have been essential to the maintenance of faith—disappeared with the progress of events, then they naturally disappeared with it. The learned writers in question, however, are one and all very much embarrassed, and very much divided in opinion, when they are required to say where the line is to be drawn in history after which miracles totally ceased; and what is calculated greatly to add to their embarrassment is, that the more the original documents from which the historians of past times selected the materials of their narratives are brought to light, the more evidence becomes multiplied showing that miracles appear later than the dates which they have severally attempted to assign for their having disappeared. For example, Mr. Morison, a recent biographer of St. Bernard, admits that the twelfth century saw abundance of miracles worked by this saint; and there is no accounting for the success of St. Francis Xavier except by confessing that, in like manner, the sixteenth century saw many wonderful miracles worked by him. Thus the mere progress of historical research is on the high road to prove, by its own evidences, the particular doctrine which Catholic theology maintains as a theological truth, viz. that miracles are intended to

* *Epistola Patrum Baltimore ad Pium IX., Summum Pontificem, Baltimore, 19 Maii 1852,—Concilia Baltimorensia.* J. Murphy, Baltimore.

continue to the end of the world. And of course, if they continue, they must continue to have the same purpose which they have always had; viz. to be a testimony on the part of God Himself, of which men will always equally stand in need, in order that there may be a beacon pointing out to them where they are to find the orthodox faith. Protestant writers may thus persist to maintain, in perfect good faith, that miracles have ceased; but as documents of history keep multiplying around them, historical evidence itself will at last result in showing that the cessation of miracles is entirely limited to the Protestant populations themselves; and that God, true to His promise, in such measure as in His wisdom He sees fit, keeps always giving an abundance of miraculous testimony to mark the presence of the orthodox faith, as preserved and taught by the Church of Rome.

The direct Scripture promise of the continuance of miracles to the end of the world is found in the Gospel of St. Mark: "Going into the whole world, preach the Gospel to every creature. He that shall believe and be baptised shall be saved, and he that shall not believe shall be condemned. But these signs shall follow those that believe: in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Such is the promise, and the Evangelist adds: "But they, departing, preached every where; the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with the signs following" (Mark xvi. 20).

Our Lord has made here no partial or limited promise, and the Church has not received this promise as having any limitation annexed to it; for the entire process of each new canonisation of saints is based on the existence of juridical proofs of miracles having been worked. And the reason for this continuance of miracles is perfectly plain and simple to understand. Men are born into the world in the nineteenth century with just the same radical infirmity of understanding and will as regards accepting the supernatural truths of the Christian revelation as they ever were; and consequently the aids and encouragements to faith derivable from the presence of manifestations of the Divine power in the working of miracles is equally a necessity of human nature now as at any other time; and if the race of men were to continue on earth for nineteen centuries more, they would still stand in just the same need of the finger-post of miraculous power, pointing out the way to the orthodox faith.

An extremely remarkable testimony to the truth of this necessity of the continued presence of miracles, as the indispensable sustenance of

faith in supernatural truths, occurs in the following words of a modern writer of some eminence in the world of letters. Speaking of Mr. Home, the notorious spirit-medium, the writer says :

"My concern is only to note his place in the history of spiritualism, as the herald of a coming restoration of faith in the indissoluble union of the natural and the supernatural, of disembodied and embodied spirits, which Protestantism, in what the Rev. John Henry Newman calls its '*dreary development*,' has for a time destroyed. Mr. Home has not assumed any other character than the foundation-layer. . . . Without the foundation-stone there can be no building. Without faith, promulgation of sublime and spiritual truths would fall dead upon dead souls; they would be like the rays of the sun, not falling upon respondent earth, but upon barren vacuity. In vain would Jacob's ladder have invited the angels who issue from temporal bodies to climb it to heaven, had not its foot been set upon the earth. Men sunk in their spiritual condition to the earth must have manifestations of the earth first to awake them."

Here, at least, is a remarkable confession of the fallen spiritual condition to which Protestantism, with its denial of miraculous manifestations, has conducted educated society. To the particular regeneration, however, which Mr. Howitt expects from "spiritualism," the well-instructed Catholic will oppose our Lord's words: "Then, if any man shall say unto you, Behold, here is Christ, or there,—believe him not; for there shall rise up many false Christs and false prophets; and they shall give great signs and prodigies, so that, if it were possible, even the elect may be led into error. Behold, I have foretold this to you" (Matt. xxiv. 23).

DIALOGUE SIXTH. *A scripture promise of the person of a Guide for all men* (p. 93).

"For the people of Sion shall dwell in Jerusalem; weeping, thou shalt not weep,—He shall surely have pity upon thee; at the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee.

"And the Lord will give you spare bread and short water, and will not cause thy teacher to fly away from thee any more; and thine eyes shall see thy teacher.

"And thy ears shall hear the word of one admonishing thee behind thy back: *This is the way; walk ye in it: go not aside, neither to the right hand, nor to the left.*" (Isaias xxx. 19-21.)

* William Howitt's *History of the Supernatural in all Ages and in all Churches, Christian and Pagan, demonstrating a Universal Faith.*

Here is a prophet anticipating the invariable language of the Church of Rome to all the people of the whole world, incessantly uttered by the Sovereign Pontiffs, and as incessantly reschoed in the various provinces of the Church. Thus the First Synod of the Province of Westminster enacts in its seventh decree (A.D. 1853): "Since, therefore, in our times and in this country, error has put on a new mask, and there are not a few who profess that they hold the doctrines of the Church, while they imitate its rites and ceremonies, and who, notwithstanding that they are separated from fellowship with the Bride of Christ, call themselves Catholics, and delude the more simple people that they can obtain salvation outside the Church, it is necessary to oppose to this error, as the most sure shield of faith, the doctrine of the unity of the Church, and of the inviolable communion which must of necessity be had with the centre of unity. Let all, therefore, who hold intercourse with these kind of persons, whether by writing or by conversation, beware how they confirm them in their errors. Rather let us always exclaim with St. Jerome, 'Whosoever shall eat the Lamb outside this house is profane;' and 'if any one be not found in the ark, he shall perish when the deluge comes'" (*Acts and Decrees of the First Provincial Council of Westminster*).

DIALOGUE SEVENTH. *The inability of the Scripture to give a decision apart from an interpreter* (p. 105).

On another question, upon the decision of which the whole structure of human society nevertheless rests, in the same manner as the whole of theology may be said to rest upon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the appeal to the Bible apart from an authoritative interpreter equally leaves men in doubt and uncertainty. This is the question of the indissolubility of matrimony. According to the Roman canon-law, matrimony consummated has always been held indissoluble *quoad vinculum*; whereas, according to the recent legislation of the English Parliament, in virtue of which the new Court of Probate and Divorce has been erected, matrimony is now decided to be dissoluble *quoad vinculum*, after proof of the adultery of either party. The argument turns on the meaning of our Lord's use of the word "dismissing" (Matt. v. 32). He allows the husband to dismiss his wife for the cause of fornication; and the question is, whether the power to dismiss is limited to the husband's dismissing his wife, *a mens et toro*, i.e. so far as to be liberated from the necessity of continuing to live with her, or whether it authorises him to dismiss her in such a sense as that both should be free to marry again. Now whatever else may be doubtful, one thing is quite plain, that the Bible by itself has no power of deciding the doubt. The canon-

law of the Church has decided it in one way from the beginning, and British parliamentary legislation has now decided it in another. Two other striking inconveniences, it may be remarked, certainly arise out of the recent parliamentary interpretation of our Lord's words, viz. first, that it can be no longer God who now joins together those whom, under the new legislation, men may afterwards put asunder; and secondly, that a son or daughter may now have his or her father and step-mother, and his or her mother and step-father, all living at once, and may thus be at home as son or daughter in two different rival families, in one of which a mother will be acknowledged, and in the other a father. The point of law whether a marriage between a brother and sister under such circumstances might not be held to be legal can scarcely be very far distant.

*DIALOGUE NINTH. Decree of the Council of Trent on
Original Sin (p. 140).*

If any one shall assert that the sin of Adam—which in its origin was one, and which, being transfused by propagation, and not by imitation, exists in all, and is proper to each one—can be taken away either by the power of human nature itself, or by any other remedy than by the merit of the one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has reconciled us to God in His blood, having been made our justification, sanctification, and redemption; or if he denies that the merit itself of Jesus Christ is applied as well to children as to adults through the Sacrament of Baptism, properly administered in the form of the Church,—let him be anathema. For “there is no other name given to men under heaven whereby they are to be saved;” and hence the voice, which said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world;” and the words, “Whosoever ye are that have been baptised, ye have put on Christ” (*Con. Trid. sess. v. 8*).

Christ has built His Church on the Apostle Peter (p. 145).

The following remarkable testimony from a Protestant writer occurs in the first volume of Mr. Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri*, or political history of the great Latin Patriarchate:

“In the year, 440 A.D. the latter Pontiff (Xistus III.) was succeeded by Leo, archdeacon of the Roman Church, a person so advantageously distinguished by his piety and learning, that he was chosen in his absence, and without a dissentient voice, to fill the vacant throne.

“The principle of the Petrine prerogative was more clearly and sharply

defined in the mind of this extraordinary man than in that of any of his predecessors. Nor did the idea, once conceived, undergo any change from the beginning to the close of his career. In all his sermons and addresses he adhered to the single commentary upon the words of the Lord to Peter. The Apostle, he says, was called *Petra*, the rock; by which denomination he is constituted the foundation. In his chair *dwelleth the ever-living power, the superabounding authority*. Let the brethren, therefore, acknowledge that he is the Primate of all Bishops, and that Christ, who denieth His gifts to none, *yet giveth unto none except through Peter*. In other passages of his writings he pursues his comments thus: Upon this rock I will build My Church. Upon this strong ground I will erect My eternal temple; and the glory of My Church, which is planted in heaven, *shall grow up on earth* from this one man's faith. This confession the gates of hell shall not shake, the bonds of death shall not bind" (Greenwood's *Cathedra Petri*, vol. i. p. 348).

DIALOGUE TENTH. *The distinction between the guilt and the penalty of sin* (p. 168).

The chief objection urged against the passage of Scripture from Matt. xii. is the one made by Calvin, who says that Christ is here speaking of the guilt of the sin against the Holy Ghost; and therefore the text is falsely alleged in proof of the existence of a purgatory, when it is not taught respecting it, that the guilt of sin is remitted in purgatory, but only the penalty incurred by it. Cardinal Bellarmine answers as follows:

"To this, I reply that the guilt at least of venial sins is remitted in purgatory, and moreover it is false that Christ is here speaking only of the guilt of sin. For the sense of the words runs thus: The sin against the Holy Ghost is not remitted either in this world or in the next, neither as regards the guilt contracted by it, nor as regards the punishment due to it; when other sins are either remitted in this world as regards the guilt, and sometimes in the other as regards the penalty due, as in the case of mortal sins; and again, sometimes in this and in the next world, as regards both guilt and penalty, which is the case with venial sins."

Purgatory, and who are the persons who go there; together with the distinction between mortal and venial sins (p. 173).

Cardinal Bellarmine, in enumerating the several errors to which the doctrine of the existence of a purgatory has given rise, cites among these

a opinion that it is necessary for *all* persons to pass through the fire purgatory. "This," he says, "is manifestly false; for the Council of Florence in its last session has defined, that some souls go to hell, others to purgatory, and others, again, are directly received into heaven. And the Church has always believed that those who die immediately after baptism cannot be exposed to the pains of purgatory, as St. Augustine teaches in the *City of God*, book xxi. c. 16, and St. Cyprian also declares the same of the martyrs who are baptised in their own blood."

It remains, then, Cardinal Bellarmine continues, after reviewing e various errors which he enumerates, that we state what is the true catholic doctrine, which is this: "Purgatory is only for those who die (1) burdened with the venial sins of which the Apostle treats in the third chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians: 'For these are they who are said to build on the foundation, wood and stubble, and who shall be saved, yet so as passing through the fire;' and again, (2) for those who die, with a debt of punishment due to their sins, of which only the guilt, and not the full penalty, has been remitted, and to whom the Scripture refers, which says, 'thou shalt not come out thence, until thou hast paid the very last farthing' " (Luke xii.).

Hence, in order to understand the complete justification of the doctrine of purgatory as a truth of reason, it is necessary to bear in mind the essential distinction that is to be drawn between sin that is mortal,—the guilt of which the forfeiture of Divine grace, and the death of the soul, together with the eternal punishment of hell, is incurred,—and sin that is only venial, which, without destroying the life of the soul, incurs a debt of temporal punishment, also, it is to be added, predisposing the soul to the commission of mortal sin. Protestants, coming to discover that the Catholic doctrine forms an entire and intelligent system built upon the foundation of right reason, have been compelled by their first step* in denying the doctrine of indulgences, to proceed to the denial of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and from thence to the denial of the existence of a purgatory, probably at first in order to rid themselves of the difficulty of being asked by the people for masses for the souls detained in purgatory. After this, they have found that their denial of purgatory, when it came to be explained as a system of theology, involved the denial of the distinction between venial and mortal sins; notwithstanding the obvious fact, that there never yet existed a code, even of human law, which was not based on an analogous distinction between crimes punishable with death, and others punishable only for a time, with the subsequent restoration of the offender to the bosom of society when the term of his punishment had expired. With reference to this distinction,

the Roman poet certainly speaks the language of the right human reason, which Protestant theology entirely tramples under foot :

“Nec vincet ratio hoc, tantumdem ut peccet idemque
 Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horte,
 Et qui nocturnus sacra Divûm legerit; adsit
 Regula, peccatis quæ pœnas irroget æquas;
 Nec scuticâ dignum horribili sectere flagello”

(l. Sat. iii. 115).

There is, then, nothing but the doctrine of a purgatory which is able to give the human understanding any solid and sufficient satisfaction, as to the way in which God apportions the pains and penalties that are incurred by the sins of men, and exacts what is due to His justice, affording men at the same time innumerable ways of refuge to His mercy and indulgence.

The doctrine of Indulgences (or the remission of the penalty due to sin), and of their applicability, by way of suffrage, to the relief of the souls detained in purgatory (p. 177).

The Catholic theology may, in some sense, be described as a continual adjustment of the tender mercy of God with the terrors of His justice; and the singular and almost unaccountable phenomenon is, that men should be found who can be zealous for the justice of God, against the very mercies which they are themselves called to share. Hence the opposition to the doctrine of Indulgences; as far, that is, as it can be considered genuine, and not the mere exigency of a contrary system. The mercy of the doctrine of purgatory, as has been shown, consists in the relation that it establishes between the surviving mourner and the departed friend or relative, by which the surviving friend is taught in what manner he is able to relieve the sufferings and to shorten the time of detention of the deceased, God in His mercy granting the grace of abundant consolation under bereavement as the reward of these pious and charitable efforts. Hence under the Catholic doctrine, both the survivor and the departed are benefited; while under Protestant unbelief, mere blank separation ensues, in which all relation between the two entirely ceases. As one of the familiar modes of benefiting the souls in purgatory is by the practice of gaining the indulgences that are made applicable by way of suffrage to the souls there detained, a brief statement of the doctrine of indulgences will be here in place. The following is the decree of the Council of Trent:

"Whereas the power of granting indulgences has been given by Christ to the Church, and that the Church has, from the most ancient times, used this same power as being derived from the gift of God, this holy Synod teaches and enjoins that the use of indulgences is to be retained in the Church, as most salutary to the Christian people, and as approved by the authority of the sacred Councils; and it binds those by an anathema, who either assert them to be useless, or deny that there is in the Church the power to grant them. But the Synod at the same time desires that moderation be used in granting them, according to the ancient and approved custom of the Church, in order that ecclesiastical discipline may not be too much weakened. As regards the abuses, however, which have crept in, by the occasion of which the very name of indulgences is blasphemed among the heretics, this Synod, desiring that such abuses be amended and corrected, enacts by this present decree, that all evil gain for obtaining them, from whence so great a source of abuse has risen up among the Christian people, be entirely abolished," &c.

The Council concludes its decree with the words, "that the boon of holy indulgences may be dispensed holily, and without corruption, to all the faithful" (Sess. xxv. *de Reform.*).

The source from which the power of granting indulgences springs is in the "heavenly treasures of the Church," of which the Council speaks, in its twenty-first session (*de Reformatione*), decreeing, "that indulgences and other spiritual graces, of which it is not fitting that the faithful should be deprived," should be officially published by the ordinaries. . . . in order that all persons may truly understand that these heavenly treasures of the Church are applied not for gain but for piety."

The following is the concise statement of the doctrine of indulgences that is found in a popular manual extensively circulated in France:

"Indulgences are a remission of the temporal penalties due to sins, whether venial or such as have been already pardoned; a remission which the Church grants in the name of God, outside the Sacrament of Penance.

"The Church is able to assist us to satisfy the Divine justice by applying to us the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints.

"A partial indulgence is when the Church remits to us only a portion of the penalty due to our sins; and a plenary indulgence is that which the Church gives for obtaining the remission of the whole of the penalty due to our sins. Those who succeed in gaining this grace in its full extent are so purified and discharged from all debt towards

" the Divine justice, that were they to die in this state they would go straight to heaven, the same as if they had died in infancy in baptismal grace and innocence.

" In order to gain indulgences, it is necessary above all things to be in the state of grace; for the Church intends, and indeed can remit to us the penalty due to sin, only in so far as we continue sincerely penitent for these sins, of the guilt of which we have already obtained the pardon from God. It is moreover necessary to perform all the works prescribed by the authority which grants the indulgences, as the condition of their being obtained.

" It is most commonly allowed to apply the indulgences which we thus gain, by way of suffrage, to the souls in purgatory; and in doing this, we do a very good work, in truth a most meritorious work of charity, in thereby coming to the aid of these suffering souls who ought to be so dear to us" (*Popular Exposition of Christian Doctrine for all Classes*. By the director of the Catechism Classes of St. Sulpice).

DIALOGUE TWELFTH. *Temporal prosperity in the present world the reward of fidelity to the Church* (p. 212).

St. Paul is extremely particular in insisting that the examples of all that befel the Hebrew people, which are recorded in the Scripture, are intended to teach the Christians. "For God," he says, "was not well pleased with many of them, seeing that they fell in the wilderness. But these things happened in a figure of us, that we should not covet evil things, as they also coveted. . . . For all these things happened to them in a figure, and are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 5). The example of the Hebrew people, then, as recorded in the Scriptures, teaches the Roman Catholics themselves, as well as all others who are merely observant spectators, that the fact by itself alone of the religion being Divine is no sort of specific whatever against the people who profess it falling into the most abject condition of social degradation and oppression under others. Thus, when Saul began his reign, and first sounded the trumpet to call his people to arms, the people who alone had the true religion hid themselves, the Scripture says, "in caves and secret places, and among the rocks, in caverns and in cisterns" (1 Kings xiii. 6); and when at length an army was got together, the only persons who had a spear were Saul himself and his son Jonathan, the cause being, as the same Scripture relates, "that there were no smiths in the land of Israel; for the Philistines had said, Lest the Hebrews make themselves spears or swords; therefore all Israel went down to the Philistines,

"each man to sharpen his ploughshare, his spade, or his axe" (1 Kings xlii. 19). Here, then, was a complete social degradation of the people of God, who alone of all people had the true religion. Signal and heavy as this punishment was, it still came upon the people by no means without their having been duly warned of the consequences of their being faithless to their God. The man of God, who had shortly before come to Heli the high-priest, had told him of the humiliation that was about to fall on his own house and on the whole people. "But now, saith the Lord, this be far from Me (to establish thy house); for whosoever shall glorify Me, I will glorify him; but whosoever shall despise Me, shall be ignoble" (Ibid. ii. 30).

Thus there is nothing absolutely to prevent the greatest social degradation coming to be characteristic of Roman Catholic populations; and when such is the case it proves nothing else except want of fidelity to their religion; and unless Roman Catholic populations were liable to be found doing exactly what the Hebrews did, and in consequence bringing upon themselves similar humiliations for the same misdeeds and delinquencies of which the Hebrews were guilty, the Apostle's list of warnings to the Christians would have no truth in it, where he says, "Be ye not idolaters, as some of them were idolaters; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play," &c. (1 Cor. x. 7, where see the whole passage).

However, it is quite worthy of note, on the other hand, that Cardinal Bellarmine enumerates the temporal felicity given by God to all who have defended the cause of the Church, as one of the notes of the Church. For he says none of the Catholic princes have ever clung with entire sincerity to the cause of God without triumphing over their enemies. The victories of Abraham, of Moses, Josue, Gideon, Samuel, David, Ezechias, Josias, and the Machabees, are well known; and in the New Testament. Constantine, the first of the emperors who defended the Church, overthrew Maxentius in much the same manner that Moses overthrew Pharaoh; as St. Augustine relates in the *City of God*: "God gave to the Emperor Constantine, who did not worship the demons, but the one true God, such abundance of earthly gifts as no one would dare to have hoped for. For he became emperor over the whole Roman Empire, which he governed and protected; he was most successful in managing his affairs, and in carrying on his wars; he succeeded in putting down all the tyrants that disputed his power, and at length, worn out with old age and labours, he died, leaving sons to inherit his throne" (book v. c. 25).

To this instance of Constantine, the Cardinal proceeds to add many others (book iv. on the Notes of the Church, c. xviii.).

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